THE INVISIBILISATION OF LESBIANS AND BISEXUAL WOMEN IN LGBTQ NGOS IN MEXICO

by

FRIDA XAMAN EK ESTRELLA GARCIA

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Political Science and International Studies
School of Government
College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham
November 2020

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

To Said

Table of Contents

Abstract **iii**

Acknowledgements **iv**

INTRODUCTION **6**

Context 6
Current debate 12
Overview of the thesis and contributions 16
Methodology 18
Contributions to knowledge 19
Roadmap 20

CHAPTER ONE **24**
Establishing gender and sexuality as development issues in scholarship and practice: internal and Mexican perspectives **24**

Introduction 24
The changing dynamics of the international development context 25
Political participation and NGOs 34
NGOs in Mexico 37
Challenging the institutionalisation of social movements and political participation 52
Conclusion 57

CHAPTER TWO **59**
Feminist & queer theory, understanding (in)visibility of lesbians and bisexual women. Theoretical Chapter **59**

Introduction 59
Feminist accounts of sexuality 61
Queer theory 69
(In)visibility/marginalisation 103
Conclusions 108

CHAPTER THREE **110**
Methodology: The road to understand gender dynamics in NGOs (Mexico) **110**

Introduction 110
Research Methodology 111
Collection of data 115
Analysing the data 123
Ethical considerations 126
Limits 128
Conclusion 130

CHAPTER FOUR **131**
Problematic gender dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico: Social Relations **131**

Introduction 131
Gender and sexuality hierarchies in LGBTQ NGOs 133
Performing masculinities in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico 166
Emotional relationships and how they shape gender dynamics within NGOs 174
Conclusion 179

CHAPTER FIVE **181**
Problematic gender dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico: Material relations **181**

Introduction 181
Lack of belonging to feminist and LGBTQ movements 183
Queer spaces 191
Building their own spaces 199
Sponsors, funding and access to resources 210
Conclusion 225

CHAPTER SIX **227**
Discussion of findings: The flawed spaces for lesbians and bisexual women & new alternatives. **227**

Introduction 227
Gender dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs and the relevance of spaces 229
The failure of exclusive spaces for lesbians and bisexual women 236
Towards visibilisation: the construction of spaces for lesbians and bisexual women 247
Conclusion 252

CONCLUSION **253**

Introduction 253
Thesis summary 254
Contributions to knowledge 256
Towards new paths 261
Personal reflections 264

REFERENCES **265**

APPENDIX A
Interview Questionnaires **289**
APPENDIX B
Profile Organisations **292**
APPENDIX C
Participants Information Sheet **302**
APPENDIX D
Participants Consent Form **304**

Abstract

The current context in international development and sexuality – which has primarily focused attention on issues such as HIV and consequently men who have sex with men – points to the lack of policy activity and scholarship on bisexual women and lesbians in politics and development. This thesis argues that this is reflective of how heteronormative and patriarchal systems have permeated research and development projects by excluding large parts of the LGBTQ movement and queer issues, and therefore bisexual women and lesbians. As such, this research presents an analysis of how lesbians and bisexual women negotiate gender and sexuality dynamics in NGOs that advocate for LGBTQ rights in Mexico. Additionally, the research identifies the causes of marginalisation for lesbians and bisexual women within said organisations. The theoretical foundations of this research are borrowed from feminist theory and queer theory, including Latin-American scholarship and feminist development approaches. These theories and approaches offer a framework to understand the marginalisation of women generally and invisibilisation of bisexual women and lesbians in the development arena. From this theoretical position, this work is based upon a qualitative investigation of women involved in LGBTQ NGOs in the specific case of Mexico. The method used was deductive/inductive and I employed semi-structured interviews with lesbians and bisexual women involved in these organisations in Mexico, producing a rich account of how gender and sexuality dynamics are experienced, lived and negotiated. Results have shown that gender dynamics are problematic and inequitable in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico; due to a hierarchisation of LGBTQ identities that privelege those that are culturally intelligable as men or perform masculinity. Thus, bisexual women and lesbians have to build their own exclusive spaces, attempting to develop their agendas and access funding. However, this is difficult given the lack of interest among sponsors in funding lesbian and bisexual women's agendas, resulting in the lack of NGOs advocating for lesbians and bisexual women exclusively. Finally, the hypervisibilisation of issues related to HIV/AIDS and reproductive rights do not leave space for lesbians' and bisexual women's issues in the arena. This leads to the conclusion that the unequal power dynamics exercised in this realm are not only socio-cultural or symbolic, they permeate tangible fields causing marginalisation that is shaped by different factors that are greater than the LGBTQ arena. These factors are systems of oppression that shape society in general, such as phallocentricity and heteropatriarchy, as well as the market and its interests, which also results in the silencing of lesbians' and bisexual women's voices.

Acknowledgements

To my supervisors: Emma Foster, for her unconditional support over my whole academic journey at the University of Birmingham. You were always the kindest and nicest person to me. I am very glad to have worked with you all these years, I would not have been able to get here without your guidance, and I will be always thankful. And Peter Kerr, for his help and support over these years. Thank you both for your academical and personal support.

To my examiners, Dr Nicola Smith and Professor Marianne Marchand, I enjoyed the viva because you made it a really kind and friendly space. I will always remember the viva as a nice experience because of you .

To my interviewees, thank you for sharing your experiences with me. I feel very honoured to have your trust. This research would not have been possible without you, thank you. Moreover, thank you to all the NGOs and my gatekeepers, especially to YAAJ A.C.

To Sayak, Raquel and Carlos, for making me question gender order, and for awakening in me the interest in gender and feminism.

To Poll, for your love, tenderness, patience and unconditional support. One of the best things that happened to me in this journey was meeting you. Walking side by side makes my life better and happier; I adore you. For the first of many life steps together.

To Cristina, for being the best friend, roommate, and family 'over the sea'. Thank you for the patience to listen to me all those hours talking about this thesis and talking about everything. I am very lucky to have known you all these years, I am very lucky to have this sisterhood.

To Jorge, for all the support over the years, for sharing with me an important part of this unique experience with love and laughs. Thank you for all the adventure.

To Tania, Adriana, Gerardo, Bruno, Malala, Francisco, Rosario (Sara), Marcela y Jorge (Sergio), thank you for making a friendship more than that; thank you for your words, love and endless moments of happiness. I think one of the best things in Birmingham is having you as my new family.

To Malala, Tania, Gerardo, and Bruno, for holding me when I thought I was not able to hold myself, for believing in me. The process of preparing the viva was tender and smooth just because you were there supporting me.

To the 10th floor crew: Samara, Maren, Timea, Alex, Kate, Manu, Matias, Darcy, Elio, Sam, Vitor, for that (the most special) sense of community that we developed. I am sure that this thesis was written better and smoother because of the time that I spent with you having fun. Thank you to Melany and Eva, for being great friends to me, and for all the advice and support; I love you guys.

To Marahy, for showing me since I was very young that women could be self-sufficient, strong and capable. Thank you for your love, mom; I am sure that the person that I am today is because of you. Thank you for believing in me.

To Said, for being my role model, for all your love and for staying by my side all my life. I will be always grateful to have you as my big brother.

To Javier, for challenging me always to be better and believing in me, thank you for your unconditional love, dad.

To my family, Bertha, for her unconditional love and support during my whole life. To Aline and Ivette, for your unconditional support over the most difficult moments. To Bernardette, for being there for me always, for her love and support, I am very lucky to have strong and loving women in my family.

To Fernanda, Paulina and Camila, because I see in you hope for a fairer world for women and girls.

To my friends, my Mexican gang: Leo, Ale, Sandy, Saul, Emanuel, Lupita and Allan. Sharing this journey with you was amazing. And to Annie, Beto, Carola, Fany, Milton, Paula and Roberto. Your friendship and support over these years has been essential to me. Thank you for sharing this journey with me despite the distance.

The financial support of Society Latin American Studies (SLAS) that funded part of my fieldwork, is gratefully acknowledged.

Y por último quiero agradecer a todas las personas en México cuyos impuestos administrados a través del Consejo Nacional para la Ciencia y la Teconología (CONACyT) fueron esenciales para financiar mis estudios de doctorado así como la presente investigación.[1]

[1]The financial support of the Mexican people, which was administrated through the CONACYT, is gratefully acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

> "Gays and lesbians [in Mexico] have clubs, social groups, churches, regular parties, pubs, and night clubs, demonstrations. What does not usually appear in their repertoire are historical studies and critical debates. There is a lack of attention to essays and history texts within anthropology and sociology."
> (Monsiváis 2011, p. 291)

Context

While there is a great deal of literature dedicated to issues of gender and/in development, as well as LGBTQ rights, there is a lack of scholarship on bisexual women and lesbians in politics and development globally, and in Mexico specifically. Although Mexico City is considered as a city at the forefront of sexuality-based rights, the reality is that the access to sexual rights is a privilege in Mexico (Lopez, 2017). The fight to access these rights started in the 1970s with the movements for reproductive rights, as well as women's rights, and all of this occurred in the context of the World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 (Hinojosa, 2001), as well as in the framework of the Stonewall riots in 1969 (Carmona, Gonzalez, Mogrovejo and Sandoval, 2020). Despite these efforts to normalise and visibilise sexual minorities, the rigid sex culture in Mexico made it impossible to imagine homosexual women, making lesbians totally invisible to society (Hinojosa, 2001); consequently, this made their access to spaces within the LGBTQ movement more difficult in comparison to gay men. This perhaps reflects the ways in which heteronormative and patriarchal

systems have permeated development projects and LGBTQ spaces by excluding bisexual women and lesbians. This is a consequence of the patriarchal conception that women should be valued on their reproductive capacity, meaning that lesbians and bisexual women, especially if they do not have children, are not taken into account as full citizens or subjects of policy in relation to politics and international development. Therefore, the main claim in this thesis is that LGBTQ spaces reproduce normalised and problematic gendered power dynamics, provoking a hierarchy of identities in which feminine identities tend to be at the bottom while masculine ones are at the top, thus mirroring systems of oppression commonplace in broader society, such as phallocentrism and heteropatriarchy, as well as their hetero/homonormativities.

In order to set out the research project, why it is important, and the objectives and contributions, I consider it crucial to show the whole picture to understand the research problem, addressing three aspects in an overview: first, the situation of sexual rights and the role of non-heterosexual women in the sector of international development; second, the specific situation of LGBTQ rights and women in Mexico with their historical construction, and third, the role of NGOs in these dynamics.

International development studies emerged after the Second World War, with the aim of improving the quality of life of populations with high levels of poverty and inequality. In the 1970s feminists started to challenge approaches within international development due to the fact that these approaches did not address women's issues. Thus, approaches with a gender perspective such as Women in Development, Women and Development as well as Gender and Development emerged in the field, helping to improve the visibilisation of women's issues. Even though the inclusion of gender issues was not complete and not perfect, at least these issues had been visibilised in development. However, it is fair to say that sexuality issues did not experience similar attention or traction in development theory and practice.

Matters of sexuality have been constructed and shaped in different ways by their socio-historical context, and for at least the last two centuries in westernised societies sexuality has been considered a private matter (Foucault, 1990; Rubin; 1984; Spivak, 1988). Therefore, it was not until the 1990s that sexuality issues started to enter the domain of international development, at the International Conference of Population and Development in 1994 and during the Fourth Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. However, in these conferences, the issues addressed were more related to reproductive rights and, to a lesser extent, HIV/AIDS. As such, these summits failed to adequately capture the multiple ways that sexuality is important when we consider development. Similarly, within international development scholarship, it was not until the 2000s that scholars began to highlight the importance of sexuality to the public domain and international development, beyond just thinking about reproductive rights and extending concerns to the wider human experience. Thus, although the field of international development has made some efforts to include sexual minorities, with recent calls to improve access to rights and equal opportunities in countries labelled as developing such as Mexico, there is still not enough research about sexuality issues, specifically of lesbians and bisexual women. As a result, in the most part, their experiences are ignored in this area of study.

As I mentioned previously, the mobilisations for LGBTQ rights in the country started in the 1970s, as a consequence or effect of the riots in the USA, in particular Stonewall. In addition, the unjustified dismissal of a man employee from a department store, because he was gay, was the tipping point in the local context, causing some movements from the LGBTQ activists, who boycotted said department store (Carmona, Gonzalez, Mogrovejo and Sandoval, 2020). Thus, the first movement of LGBT rights arose, *Frente de liberación homosexual* in México, which was led by Juan Jacobo Hernández and Nancy Cárdenas, the first publicly gay and lesbian people in Mexico. Another cornerstone within the LGBTQ rights in Mexico was the presence of lesbians at the World Conference on Women held in Mexico City, as their attendance led to the unintended side-effect of raising their profile in the eye

of the national press (Hinojosa, 2001). Concurrently, animated by the success of a lesbian presence at the Mexico Conference, a lesbian feminist movement was created in 1977 (Castro, 2010). However, this movement being largely autonomous and made up of separatist lesbians, was ultimately less visible in comparison to the lesbians that were working in the institutional side participating in the UN Conference in Mexico. Hence, that decade saw the beginning of the LGBTQ movement in Mexico, which since has been constantly evolving to extend to new spaces such as the academic and legal arenas. Thus, the whole decade of the 1970s saw a strengthening of the movement through other organisations and movements such *as Letra S, Oikabeth, Grupo Lambda de liberación* and *Frente de liberación revolucionaria*, some of which were the hosts and planners of the first demonstration of Gay Pride in 1979 in Mexico (Mogrovejo, 2000). Having only just launched in earnest in the 1970s, the decade of the 1980s was complicated by the HIV/AIDS crisis in Mexico (and across the world) provoking, to some extent, the dissolution of the movement. Nonetheless, several scholars argue (Gonzalez Villareal, 2002; Martínez Carmona, 2015) that the 1990s saw a revival in the movement. This third period of the LGBTQ movement in Mexico, which arguably shapes contemporary sexuality politics in the area, was dedicated to creating a more inclusive project: the LGBTTTI[2] movement.

At the same time as the increased activity in gay and lesbian politics, feminists were working on their own movement, the women's movement, and shaping their own agendas. The women's movement was primarily concerned with issues such as reproductive rights and gender equality, representation within the national congress and the institutionalisation of Gender Mainstreaming (Tarres, 2006). However, non-heterosexual women were not included directly within these agendas and these fights for reproductive rights in the framework of the Cairo International Conference and the Beijing Conference in the 1990s (Hinojosa, 2001; Valencia Toledano and Romero Hernandez, 2017), in which

[2] In Mexico, the LGBTQ movement is called LGBTTTI to, referring to the transgender community, transsexual community and cross-dressed "trasvesti" community and the "I" is for intersexual people.

women's rights were focused on their reproductive capacity (Lind, 2009), left aside lesbians' and bisexual women's agendas.

Parallel to the development of social movements, including the gay and lesbian and women's movements, in Mexico and globally, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) gained unprecedented popularity. These NGOs typify the institutionalisation of social movements, seeking legitimate means to change the status quo through civil society participation (Lopes de Sousa, 2013). In Mexico, specifically, NGOs emerged as part of the collective action of the civil society in response to the government and its arbitrary violations of human rights at the end of the 1960s (Lopez, 2015). Despite their prior existence, their popularisation occurred during the 70s and 80s and was followed by an even greater upsurge in the 1990s (Brumley, 2010). Some of these organisations were advocating for human rights, and subsequently focused on LGBTQ rights as part of the movement dedicated to that community and their access to the same opportunities as heterosexual people. LGBTQ organisations increased during the 21st century (Lopez, 2017), making the movement stronger and following the global trend regarding the issues of sexual minorities (Mogrovejo, 2010). However, due to the crisis of HIV/AIDS (Lind, 2009) and the gradual predominance of gay men's voices in the LGBT movement (Castro, 2010), the LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, as this thesis will demonstrate, are biased in favour of matters related to gay men. At the same time, those advocating for women's rights have challenged the assumption that women should belong only to the private sphere (Tarres, 1996) and sought to fight for women's human rights and gender equality through NGOs, understanding that the welfare state does not work properly to ensure their equality and access to opportunities. However, these NGOs tend to speak for, and visibilise, the experiences of heterosexual women, marginalising other sexual identities and behaviours.

Hence, NGOs advocating for LGBTQ rights, as well as NGOs advocating for women, emerged in Mexico, but none of them addressed issues related to lesbians and bisexual women. As a result, these NGOs are not sincerely representative and only have precarious spaces to fight for LGBTQ rights. This demonstrates that organisations working with development agencies and the international community as well as those working locally, are themselves implicated in reproducing some of the dynamics that undermine a full understanding of gender and sexuality issues by reproducing gender ideologies that have historically marginalised both women and non-normative sexualities. Further, given that these NGOs are crucial to the development of better gender and sexuality politics, the fact that they reproduce problematic power dynamics is deeply concerning and something that this thesis addresses.

Above I have attempted to present a picture of the dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico in which lesbians and bisexual women face a lack of representation in the movement, as well as lack of attention and funding to their own agendas. The situation of the LGBTQ community in general in Mexico, in which same sex couples barely have access to equal marriage or, in some cities, access to adoption – in other words, there is no recognition of human rights for LGBTQ people (Lopez, 2017) – means that improving advocacy for *all groups* represented under the LGBTQ acronym is crucial to improve the experience of sexual minorities in the country. This political objective has incentivised my research on the topic. In addition to my political position, my identity as a non-heterosexual Mexican woman, also prompted my interest in investigating, grasping and explaining why non-heterosexual women's agendas, organisation and activists are invisibilised and marginalised in the LGBTQ arena in Mexico; both within the activists' world of the development industry, as well as within the academic research arena.

Current debate

Within the scholarship of international development there exist studies from queer (Lind, 2009, 2010) and feminist perspectives (Steans, 2013; Enloe, 2014; Shepherd, 2015; Cornwall, Correa and Jolly, 2008; Sheill, 2006; Cornwall and Jolly, 2006; Correa and Parker, 2004; Petchesky, 2000a; Petchesky, 2000b). These authors have researched the international relevance of sexual rights, LGBTQ people and all those who do not fit in with gender norms in a heteronormative society. These scholars have also shown that the majority of the literature has primarily focused attention on issues such as HIV and subsequently gay men (who are constructed as a key population in HIV management). So far, they have only produced theoretical work on this and there remains a lack of detailed empirical work exploring the experiences and agendas for lesbians and bisexual women.

In the specific case of Latin America, some studies address the different issues regarding citizenship and politics about LGBTQ rights in the region. For instance, de la Dehesa (2010), in exploring the process of democratisation in Mexico and Brazil as it linked to different sexual expressions, critiqued the discourse of reducing sexual rights to health rights and focusing on HIV, subsequently marginalising women's sexual rights and health. In addition, Lind and Arguello (2009) discuss the relationship between gender/sexuality and citizenship, and how this has been changing in Latin America since the entrance of sexuality as a factor within international development, challenging the idea of fixed identities. Looking specifically at Mexico, Carrillo (2007) analyses how institutions and the state have an important influence in the construction of imaginaries about sexuality, showing that addressing agendas to create policies for LGBTQ people is relevant because they modify the perception of the people, pushing the State to frame LGBTQ rights within the law. As we can see, studies about LGBTQ rights address these topics as one general matter. This is necessary to explain and understand the process of expansion of LGBTQ rights in the region as in Mexico (Corrales, 2015).

However, it is also necessary to break down the problematic issues in the LGBTQ arena and its access to rights, looking at the different faces and actors involved in this social panorama. For example, some studies, for example see Narayanaswamy (2014) and Alvarez (1999), are focused on the role of NGOs as the institutionalisation of social movements in Latin America. These studies criticise the perspective of NGOs in Latin America. Narayanaswamy (2014) contested westernised approaches and Alvarez (1999) observed that NGOs have depoliticised social movements. Nevertheless, the few studies focused on the case of Mexico and women/gender with regard to NGOs in Mexico challenge this argument. Tarres (1995) affirmed that NGOs are used by women as platforms to have access to the public sphere, while Chen (2014) showed that the role of feminist NGOs in Mexico is fundamental to create consciousness and for political mobilisation.

Regarding research, scholarship on LGBTQ NGOs and their internal dynamics in Latin America is sparse. The majority of the investigations focus on the institutionalisation of LGBTQ movements, such as studies by Figari (2010) and Friedman (2009) who examine the relationship between left-wing governments and their action towards women and LGBTQ rights in Latin America. Similarly, McGee and Kampwirth (2015) made a comparison between Mexico and other countries in Latin America, such as Nicaragua, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and Venezuela. They analysed the relationship between sexual rights and the state, as well as the importance of incorporating LGBTQ movements into the state. For the specific case of Mexico, Lopez (2017), and Lopez and Hincapie (2015) carried out an analysis of the LGBTQ movement, how the federalisation of Mexico is holding back the progress of LGBTQ rights and how the NGOs for human rights have increased in relevance as a consequence of the crisis of violence in recent decades. While some research has been carried out for Mexico, the gender dynamics within the LGBTQ arena and NGOs remain largely unexplored. As Carmona, Gonzalez, Mogrovejo and Sandoval (2020) state:

> "One of the aspects that most attracts attention in the written production on the homosexual movement in Mexico is the absence of discussions about its characteristics, particularities, relationships […] There are no studies on emotions, on mobilization repertoires, on cycles of movement, on frames of reference, on political cultures, nor on trajectories, resonances, or resource mobilization."[3] (p. 15)

Thus, on e of the main objectives of this thesis is to zoom in on the LGBTQ NGOs and understand some of the practices that they have and how gender dynamics and systems of oppression, such as heteropatriarchy and neoliberalism, impact the construction and development of LGBTQ NGOs (including NGOs specific to lesbians and bisexual women). Indeed, a number of other studies help to set the basis for this research; to explain and understand the situation of LGBTQ NGOs and the role of women within those NGOs. On one side are studies that focus on institutions and the role of non-heterosexual women. For example, Posa Guinea, Robledo Desh and Zabala Peroni in their 2010 study talk about rights and lesbians in Paraguay. Moreover, Thayer (2010) and Hinojosa (2001) both present a historical analysis of the presence of lesbians in different socio-geographical contexts in Latin America. Finally, Friedman (2010), focussing on the relevance of spaces, discusses how lesbians and bisexual women are also looking for spaces in the virtual sphere. These studies, while providing some hints about the nature of the dynamics in those spaces for lesbians and bisexual women, do not develop to any extent the specific dynamics within the LGBTQ realm and its related NGOs. In fact, there are only two studies that discuss the dynamics of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs. First is a report (Posa Guinea, Robledo Desh and Zabala Peroni, 2010) about labour discrimination of lesbians in Latin America. Second is a policy paper (Valencia Toledano y Romero Hernández, 2017) which talks about the invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico with the aim of showing the necessity to create public policy specifically for them. These two sources benefit this thesis in two ways, first they established that there is different types of

[3] My own translation.

discrimination and marginalisation of lesbians and bisexual women in Mexico specifically and Latin American in general. Second, the policy paper, especially, visibilised the need of be heard and seen by the state in order to gain access to fundamental rights. Nevertheless, these two documents address the topic from a very superficial and general perspective. This thesis, contributing to this literature, examines this marginalisation in depth in order to develop a better understanding of the causes of marginalisation and how it is experienced.

On the other hand, there are some studies that analyse how lesbians, specifically, have created a movement outside of the institutionalisation of the social movements and they disagree with the NGOs, considering them as damaging the lesbian-feminist movement (Castro, 2010; Mogrovejo, 2010). Overall, in the context of a dearth of literature in this field, scholars such as Falquet (2014), Alcorro-Heredia (2019) and Malnis (2019) call for more scholarship to visibilise the lesbian-feminist movement outside of institutionalisation. This branch of literature encourages researchers to explain and grasp why lesbians are challenging the institutions, opening the door to my research, which seeks to scrutinise the factors, reasons and dynamics of the different identities within the LGBTQ movement in Mexico.

All that said, research does exist on lesbians and bisexual women within international development scholarship, explaining and analysing how their reproductive capacity places them in a disadvantaged position because of the heteropatriarchal system of oppression (Jolly, 2000; Sheill, 2006; Lind, 2010). There also exist investigations about the relevance of the institutionalisation of LGBTQ social movements throughout NGOs to achieve human rights for that community in the Latin American region (de la Dehesa, 2010; Figari, 2010; McGee and Kampwirth, 2015). However, there remains a lack of research about how unequal gender relations are embedded in the LGBTQ field, in particular in NGOs advocating for LGBTQ rights in Mexico. Here, I will go on to argue, we see a situation in

which lesbians and bisexual women are marginalised under the same unequal dynamics linked to heteropatriarchy. In this sense, this thesis seeks to fill that gap in the scholarship. Therefore, the main purpose of this research project is to analyse and explain the ways in which lesbians and bisexual women negotiate gender and sexuality dynamics within NGOs that advocate for LGBTQ rights in Mexico, as well as to identify the causes of marginalisation of lesbians and bisexual women within said organisations.

Overview of the thesis and contributions

In order to investigate to what extent lesbians and bisexual women are invisibilised in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, as well as the factors that contribute to this invisibilisation, this thesis posits the following three main research questions:

- (Q1) *How do lesbians and bisexual women experience and negotiate gender and sexuality dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?*

This will allow me to understand and grasp the dynamic inside the NGOs, and understand the different specific relationships among different actors, leading to the second question:

- (Q2) *What factors have contributed to the failure of lesbians and bisexual women in getting their agendas heard in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?*

Although it is important to know how the dynamics within the NGO**s** are negotiated, to grasp them deeply and in detail I consider it necessary to explore the factors that are involved in marginalising the agendas of lesbians and bisexual women. And finally, I posit the third question, which attempts to explore specifically the disadvantages suffered by non-heterosexual women:

- (Q3) *Why are lesbians and bisexual women marginalised, invisibilised and ghettoised in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?*

From these questions, I claim that (i) lesbians and bisexual women are invisibilised within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, due to the ways that dynamics of gender and sexuality are (re)produced by heteropatriarchal structures in these institutions. In addition, (ii) lesbians and bisexual women face additional obstacles in fully engaging with LGBTQ NGOs relative to their male counterparts and these barriers replicate inequalities related to gender in line with heteropatriarchal norms. And finally, (iii) the data-set will help to explore the ways in which these NGOs challenge and reproduce power relations associated with gender and sexuality – which is particularly important given that these NGOs are at the forefront of gender and sexuality politics at a national and international level.

These are the main research questions and hypotheses which my thesis explores through both a theoretical lens but also in a data driven way. Regarding theory, I use feminist and queer theory as combining both approaches allows an understanding of the marginalisation of women and invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women. Specifically, feminist theory helps to grasp the foundations of the marginalisation of women and the unequal power relations that women experience because of their gender. However, a feminist approach is unable to fully capture the oppression of sexual minorities, such as lesbians and bisexual women. Therefore, it is necessary to consider a theoretical framework to also improve understandings of sexuality matters. Different scholarship exists, such as in the field of lesbian and gay studies, that addresses sexual orientation. However, lesbian and gay scholarship tends to understand a gender reality as something binary and fixed. Queer theory, on the other hand, is more useful for this study as "rather than attempt[ing] to move outside or invert the opposition, [queer theory] could be seen as examining the ways in which the opposition has shaped moral and political hierarchies of knowledge and power" (Spargo, 2007, p. 67). Thus, this

body of knowledge allows us to grasp issues of sexuality from a poststructuralist position outside of the binaries. In addition, it challenges how LGBTQ identities have adopted normative social standards and models in line with the heteronormative standard (Stryker and Whittle, 2006; Ward and Shneider. 2009; Spargo, 2010). As Seidman (2001) affirms "queer politics […] aim less to normalize gay identities than to free all sexualities from normalizing regulation. The norm of heterosexuality is challenged but in the context of contesting a range of social controls over sexualities" (pp. 321 - 322). Similarly, Gammon and Isgro (2006) state "Queer theory and its politics seek to disrupt normative conceptions of identity as is typically practised in both heterosexual and homosexual arrangements, to resist 'regimes of the normal" (p.173). In other words, queer theory challenges heteronormativity /homonormativity. It is this sentiment, and these concepts, that underpin my own research, as queer theory provides ways to understand the particular situation of gender dynamics of LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico; including factors such as race and class (intersectionality), as well as concepts like queer spaces and homonormativity, that are essential for the development of this research.

Methodology

Aiming to explore and analyse the gender dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs, this research employs a qualitative approach this is because a qualitative approach promotes the analysis of topics which are related to subjectivity and personal experiences embedded in the discourses of, and related to, each participant **(**Reinharz and Davidman, 1992). In addition, this project aims – among other objectives – to visibilise women and promote their voices and, in so doing, generate knowledge from my feminist positionality. Several feminists have challenged and criticised pseudo-scientific methods that reduce social phenomena to metrics and numbers (see Sandra Harding, 1987) and as such there is a tendency

for feminist research to draw on qualitative methods; given that, the qualitative approach is the one that fits best for this research.

Reflecting the qualitative approach, I chose to use semi-structured interviews; not only because this allowed me to analyse and reflect upon gender dynamics and how they are negotiated within the institutions, but also as a means to explore how participants identify themselves in political, economic and socio-cultural contexts. I interviewed 13 lesbians and bisexual women that participate in LGBTQ NGOs as employees or CEOs. In addition, I interviewed 9 CEOs of the same organisations, who between them identified as one of the following: gay men, heterosexual women, trans men and/or lesbians. The information they provided presented a good insight into the organisational consensus on how lesbians and bisexual women are represented and understood by their NGOs – at least superficially – and what initiatives are in place specifically to improve the visibility of lesbian and bisexual women. These interviews also provided information about the level of importance afforded these initiatives, which was partly, albeit implicitly, expressed through conversations about the funding in place, or not as they case may be, to encourage the inclusion of these women. In total, I conducted 19 interviews with representatives from 12 different organisations. The analysis of the data was an iterative process, in which from the transcribed interviews, I developed seven different codes. Thus, I employ an inductive/deductive strategy for the interpretation of the data. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3 where I discuss my methodology.

Contributions to knowledge

As well as a normative contribution, this thesis makes both empirical and theoretical contributions to the scholarship. Empirically, the data shows that in Mexico within the LGBTQ realm gender relations are unequal, disrupting the assumption that the LGBTQ community is inevitably aware of unequal

gender relations purely because they experience unequal power relations regarding their sexuality. In disrupting this assumption, and driven by my research data, this thesis presents a hierarchy of how the power relations are organised within the LGBTQ community relying upon their identity and its associated letter in the acronym. From the data gathered, this thesis shows that within said organisations, those identities that perform masculinity are at the top of the hierarchy, while identities related to femininity are at the bottom of the hierarchy. These dynamics result in the marginalisation and ghettoisation of lesbians and bisexual women and this is manifest in concrete situations such as lack of funding from sponsors or fewer numbers of NGOs advocating lesbians' and bisexual women's agendas.

In terms of theory, the project employs various concepts of systems of oppression – phallocentricity, heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity and homonormativity – to create a framework that helps to understand the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women within LGBTQ contexts. I use this to make sense of the unequal power relations that restrict non-heterosexual women from being part of NGOs to raise their voices, highlight their needs and fight for their rights in the LGBTQ arena. Moreover, in Chapter 6 I develop two strategies that show different paths in which lesbians and bisexual women arguably might find a different and more equal way of negotiating gender dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs and, in general, within the LGBTQ realm. These normative recommendations are an innovative contribution to existing knowledge of the situation that lesbians and bisexual women face within the LGBTQ activism sphere in Mexico.

Roadmap

Following this introduction, the thesis is broadly split into six substantive chapters and a conclusion. The first three chapters are dedicated to setting the basis of the research. The literature review (Chapter

1) establishes the current debates about the different studies that have been done in relation to my core research, that is the marginalisation of lesbians and bisexual women in the international development industry, specifically in NGOs advocating LGBTQ rights in Mexico. I present an extensive review of the literature, going from the literature in the international development industry to more specific literature about LGBTQ rights in Mexico and Latin America. These sections seek to establish the debates around the topic, as well as to highlight the lack of literature relevant to this topic. In addition, I explore the role of NGOs advocating for gender and women and LGBTQ in Latin America, addressing both the advantages as well as the critiques of the institutionalisation of social movements, and using the autonomous lesbian-feminist movement in Mexico as an example of the critique of the institutionalisation of social movements. This chapter is valuable because it aims to highlight the key lines of the existing literature to establish the path of this thesis, which is analysing the gender and power dynamics of lesbians and bisexual women in Mexico, as well as locating and exploring their marginalisation in the LGBTQ arena.

The second chapter is dedicated to developing the theoretical foundations of the research, which are based in feminist and queer scholarship. From feminist scholarship I explore two different branches. First, I look at feminist accounts of sexuality that help to understand gender in relation to sexuality, how both are rooted in each other and how this works to organise society and its different spheres. Second, I explore the lesbian separatist scholarship in its analyses of the marginalisation of non-heterosexual women, considering broader systems of oppression of gender within non-normative sexualities, and highlighting the relevance of women-exclusive spaces. Thus, this scholarship helps to explain the different factors that operate to marginalise women in heterosexual and non-heterosexual spaces. In addition, this thesis is informed by queer theory, which offers a deep and complete analysis of sexual minorities, sexual orientation and gender identity, to explain the experiences and dynamics of non-normative sexualities. Further, queer theory helps to analyse the experiences of lesbians and

bisexual women outside the fitted and normative identities shaped by homonormative standards in LGBTQ arena, as well as using intersectionality as a tool of analysis, as I mentioned directly above. Moreover, in this chapter, I develop a discussion between three systems of oppression that entails a dialogue between the concepts phallocentricity, heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity/ homonormativity that help to comprehend the marginalisation of non-heterosexual women.

The third chapter of the thesis discusses the methodological approach that underpins the research. The first part of the chapter states the methodological approach, which, as I have mentioned, is qualitative. In the first section, I also remind the reader of the research questions and the hypotheses, as well as the relevance of my positionality as a researcher and feminist. The second part of the chapter covers the research design and the gathering of the data, as well as the analysis, were carried out. Finally, the chapter discusses the ethical considerations as well as the limits of the research. These three chapters encompass the basis for the empirical research, which is developed in the second half of the thesis.

The fourth and fifth chapters, mapping onto my first and second research questions respectively, explore the findings of the empirical research. Chapter four dissects the organisation of the gender dynamics within the NGOs from the data gathered; namely through the experiences of the interviewees. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first, I construct a hierarchy of identities that exists in the LGBTQ field in Mexico. The second section scrutinises the performance of non-hegemonic masculinities and their relevance in this sphere. The final section addresses the relevance of emotions for lesbians and bisexual women and how they shape their relationships in the LGBTQ realm and within the NGOs. The fifth chapter, which is the second empirical section, explores and discusses the material factors that generate the unequal gender dynamics articulated in Chapter 4. Thus chapter 5 scrutinises the lack of belonging of lesbians and bisexual women to LGBTQ and feminist

NGOs, the idea of queer spaces of the interviewees, which refers to the signification of physical and non-physical spaces, as places where they perform their identity, for example, LGBTQ clubs, associations and NGOs. Moreover, it addresses the ghettoisation of lesbians and bisexual women, to finally talk about the hierarchy that exists in the agendas regarding the funding provided by the sponsors. These two chapters together with the theoretical chapter (2) construct the discussion chapter which follows.

In the sixth chapter of this thesis, from the findings and the theoretical foundations that inform this research, I interpret and discuss why lesbians and bisexual women tend to be marginalised within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. The chapter is divided into three sections. First, I talk about the factors that lead to the hierarchisation of identities and how they also cause the ghettoisation of lesbians and bisexual women. I then scrutinise why women-exclusive spaces fail in achieving permanent spaces to develop the agendas of lesbians and bisexual women. In the final section I explore and suggest different strategies to modify the unequal gender dynamics that exist in the LGBTQ field.

I conclude the thesis by readdressing the research questions for context and carrying out a recapitulation of the analytical chapters of the thesis to demonstrate the contributions to knowledge, highlighting that this investigation responds to the need to visibilise the unequal gender relations that lesbians and bisexual women face inside of the LGBTQ arena in Mexico and the need to show that the factors that shape this unequal gender relations are not only socio-cultural, but are also larger than the sphere of the LGBTQ community. These factors come from the broader society and are inextricably linked to systems of oppression such as neoliberalism, phallocentricity and heteropatriarchy.

CHAPTER ONE

Establishing gender and sexuality as development issues in scholarship and practice: internal and Mexican perspectives

"Thus, not only is 'the personal political,'
'development is personal, as well"
(Marchand, 2003, p. 71)

Introduction

The chapter is organised into six sections. The first section starts with the context, to give a general sketch of how gender studies has entered into the field of international development, followed by how sexuality studies have been progressing and changing with new perspectives from the 1940s to the 2000s in the same field. This helps to understand the struggles faced by women and LGBTQ communities within the international development arena. The second section offers an outline of works relating to sexual rights in Latin America and some specific cases of Mexico, as well as a couple of texts regarding public policy on sexuality in this region[4].

[4] Two studies are not from Latin America. However, I consider that they contribute to the understanding of this research, because one is a thesis from Bosnia, which does a study akin to this, and the second is a critique of the institutionalisation of women NGOs in the Global South, a category in which Latin America is considered to be included.

The third section is dedicated to developing how political participation and the relationship with NGOs is understood. This is directly related to the fourth section, which explains how Non-Governmental Organisations are understood, their definition, and their importance in this research. In addition, I outline studies about NGOs in Mexico and finally, I list the different NGOs regarding gender and sexuality that exist in Mexico.

Research about women and gender NGOs is shown in the fifth section. These studies are significant because women were the first group that entered the public sphere to claim their rights regarding gender and sexuality issues (Pecheny and de la Dehesa, 2011). Thus, this could be considered the basis of the fight for sexual rights and visibilisation of women and sexual minorities.

In the sixth section, I review the studies carried out around sexual rights, LGBTQ movements and NGOs in Latin America. This section highlights that they are sparse and the majority are not focused only on one country, so they are more general than specific about the situation of these topics in the region. The seventh section narrows its focus to studies of lesbians and bisexual women in the same region. It addresses topics related to NGOs and the role of lesbians and bisexual women in public spaces, which is strongly associated with dynamics in NGOs, such as public policy, lesbian organisation and lesbian movements in Latin America.

The changing dynamics of the international development context

International development studies emerged after the Second World War because of a growing international concern for improving the quality of life in countries with high levels of poverty and inequality, specifically in countries that were commonly labelled as the 'Third World' during the Cold War era. It is important to note that international development studies emerged in a specific intellectual and political context in Europe, not least in the United Kingdom (Sumner and Tribe, 2008).

Within the field different theoretical trends emerged. Modernisation theory was the main approach in the first years of development studies. This eurocentric perspective served as a manual for the imperial management of society (Pieterse, 2010). This theory is rooted in the social change idea of the nineteenth century social sciences, in which modernisation is a linear and bipolar process with stages from primitivism to civilisation and tradition to modernity (Pieterse, 2010). Thus, this perspective is based on economic growth and industrialisation, as synonymous with modernisation and development. Afterwards, dependency theory appeared as a critique of modernisation. This has its basis in Marxist philosophy, and its principal concept is centre-periphery. There are several variations of this theory, but its core focus is "studying the situation of the peripheral capitalist countries from the point of view of the conditioning effects which external forces and structures produce on the internal structures of these countries" (Larrain, 2013, p. 112). The most radical point of view in dependency theory, by Gunder Frank, asserts that capitalist development in the periphery, and Latin America, in particular, is impossible (Ayres and Clark, 1998).

In addition, theories of neoliberalism and good governance emerged in the field. On the one hand, neoliberalism eliminates the foundation of development economics, leaving market forces to do their work. It considers that the intervention of the state for development results in a market distortion. On the other hand, good governance theory has advocated the analysis of the intervention of the state in development and its effectiveness regarding bureaucracy and accountability, as well as analysing the overall performance of this intervention. Its main objective is monitoring the state to control it (Fritz and Menorcal, 2006). Hence, these two perspectives argue exactly the opposite regarding the role of the state in development and about development itself. Another relevant characteristic of development studies is their multidisciplinary nature: the construction of international development studies has been carried out throughout different disciplines of the social sciences. Thus, different issues of development are reviewed and acted on different disciplines (such as economics, political

sciences, sociology, and gender studies, among others). One of the approaches that emerged in the field of development studies was feminism and, later, gender analysis. Despite the progress in the addition of feminist perspectives, they were mapped onto mainstream and critical development approaches from the 1970s onwards, the development industry more broadly failed to take issues of gender and, more so, sexuality seriously beyond looking at welfare (reproduction and population).

Feminist theory within international development

Feminist theory made its entrance into the international development (ID) discipline in the 1960s, with the primary aim of visibilising women within the discipline. Feminist interventions were based on the premise that biology of women is not destiny and an understanding that international development processes affect men and women differently (Momsen, 2003). However, in contrast to other disciplines the importance of including women was not only in the academic arena or showing their experiences or histories but was also related to practice. The intention of their inclusion was also to programmes and policies dedicated to improving the living conditions of the marginalised population; therefore, visibilising women was pertinent to improving their specific life situations. The interest was framed in an economic sense, given that the perspective of international development in that decade was focused on economic growth. The most relevant scholar within this perspective was Esther Boserup (2007) who in the 1970s began to challenging access of women to the same opportunities that development focused on (Scott, 1995). This was the first attempt to include women within development; the perspective was called Women in Development (WID), and it looked for new tools to analyse development regarding women's inequality (Jaquette, 2017).

This perspective was the first attempt to visibilise women, but the approach lacked critical potential, because the understanding of women as the oppressed subject was simplified, creating flaws within the measures taken. For instance, WID looked for greater equity between women and men.

Practitioners created bodies to tackle inequality, such as the UN Agency for international development (UNSAID), whose aims focused on family planning, because women's roles were reduced to that of housewives and peace-making subjects or related to nature in ecofeminist perspectives (Pearson and Jackson, 1998), all assumptions based on their reproductive capacity. Therefore, some conventions, essentialisation and generalisation about women's inequality (re)produced gender myths that permeated the discipline of international development, simplifying the role of women as passive and victims (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead, 2007), allowing the perpetuation of Western gender stereotypes. Consequently, the inclusion of women and the fight against gender inequality merely functioned as an analgesic measure to the real problem.

This first attempt and approach used in ID to include women and their issues was limited, but it was the first step that helped to visibilise and politicise gender inequality in both social sciences in general and IR and ID particularly. It is important to highlight that the approaches reviewed in this section – from feminist scholars to practitioners in international agencies – misunderstood gender and women's inequality as a fixed inequality, related directly to women and their biology, as something given culturally by these physiological features that were shared by all women regardless of their specific circumstances. In other words, these feminist approaches understood women as a fixed category applicable to all female bodies in the world. Consequently, gender and women were misinterpreted as synonyms and the political and practical solutions were built on this misconception, following programmes that generalised issues and applied all these recommendations and assumptions to different contexts and different groups of women with different needs. Furthermore, the biggest issue that did not help progress in gender equality was the misunderstanding in which women were understood essentially as victims (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead, 2004). Considering women as victims is an enormous hindrance for the process of gender equality because it reproduces the idea of women as subjects without agency attached to a specific social destiny. Therefore, the first attempt to

improve the conditions of women in ID failed (Momsen, 2003) due to the lack of understanding of gender inequality matters as an issue of power relations with many different sides, not only gender identity and oppression of women.

Therefore, new scholars looked for new ways to explain and analyse gender relations, taking into consideration this group of assumptions and misinterpretations of feminisms in ID. In this way, gender studies emerged within ID to understand and solve gender inequalities from a new perspective which helped to make progress in gender equity and find other programmes and measures to do so. The next section develops the theoretical insights of gender studies that also inform this research.

Gender studies in international development

In the 1970s, critiques of development and patriarchy emerged which served as a backdrop to a new perspective within development interested in women's issues (Marchand, 2003), known as Women and Development (WAD) approach. This is classed as a neo-Marxist feminist approach and was influential in the creation of policy and programming of many NGOs (Rathgeber, 1990; Parpart in Marchand and Parpart, 1995). Moreover, the importance of gender to the development agenda of the United Nations informed the "Decade for Women" from 1976 to 1985. Another milestone in the entrance of women into international development was the creation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 (Steans, 2015). During this period, the International Labour Organisation developed a policy considering, for the first time, the impact of women's unpaid (domestic) work and paid work in development projects (Razavi and Miller in True, 2015). However, WID and WAD were simply thinking in terms of efficiency and overlooking political structures in which women were located (Rai, 2011).

In the following decade, there appeared a different paradigm that was more nuanced than WID and WAD: Gender and Development (GAD). It was dedicated to the participation of women in NGOs, but its focus was not only on policy and practice, but also included discourse analysis and academic work. This perspective was different from previous ones, because it was focused more on gender than on women. Thus, this brought in the possibility of questioning and transforming established gender roles (Marchand and Parpart, 1995). As Rai (2011) states "WID/WAD had led a shift in the discursive focus from the inclusion of women in development towards the transformation of gender relations as the major concern" (p. 31). In addition, this perspective was considered a holistic perspective, drawing on intersectional analysis, and it considered women as agents of change (Rathgeber, 1990). Hence, these perspectives challenged programmes and paradigms of international development, reshaping the perspectives therein (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead, 2007).

Even though there were several changes in the role of women within international development, such as the creation of indexes by the UNDP as well as impacts shown in the World Development Reports (Rai, 2011), it was not until 1995 during the UN World Conference in Beijing when women were meaningfully recognised by being institutionalised to some extent, through the gender mainstreaming approach. Hence, it became the approach accepted and implemented by the member countries as a global strategy to achieve gender equality. Thus, after the 1995 UN conference, gender mainstreaming was widespread, at least rhetorically, within institutions and it was used also as a language of gender in public policy to understand men and women (True, 2015).

Therefore, some feminist scholars adopted gender mainstreaming to transform social relations of inequality through institutions and policies. The gender mainstreaming approach seeks the reorganisation, implementation, development and evaluation of policy processes, as well as policy strategy. It aims both oriented and transformative implications, due to there are tensions between

gender equality (feminist theory) and the mainstream (practice) (Walby, 2005). In addition, there is a lack of political will and money, and this also limits its potential to be transformative. As a consequence, it is generally considered that the aim of gender mainstreaming has not been accomplished (True, 2015). Furthermore, gender mainstreaming is focused on women s participation and does not automatically generate transformation: "it is necessary to consider a strategy of empowerment by organizing space for non-hegemonic actors to struggle about the promotion of the agenda of gender equality" (Verloo, 2005, p. 348). Moreover, after the boom of gender mainstreaming in Beijing, the term was overused, provoking a fatigue in all the spheres in which it was employed. For instance, there was an overemphasis on instruments and tools in donor agencies and women's organisations (Smyth, 2007). Consequently, many argue, and I agree with the argument, gender mainstreaming has been depoliticised, becoming a hollow discourse (Subrahmanian, 2007), and because of its lack of effectiveness it has been perceived uniquely as a bureaucracy that fulfils the gender quotas to consider policies of international organisations as gender mainstreamed.

Studies and approaches relating specifically to women/gender, as it links to development, have been around since at least the 1970s. Although this feminist scholarships developed to "become much more 'intersectional', not only complicating the category of gender through the intersections of race, class, nation, and sexuality and the development of masculinity studies, but also more grounded in postcolonial, anti-racist, and anti-heteronormative thought" (Marchand and Runyan, 2010, p. 10) a sustained focus on women, sexuality and development remains lacking. In other words, studies regarding sexuality – and consequently research on lesbians and bisexual women – in global development scholarship remains relatively new and under-developed. Given that sexuality has been constructed, shaped and delimited in different ways by its specific socio-historical context (Vance, 1998; Rubin, 1984; Corrêa, Petchesky and Parker, 2008; Corrêa and Parker, 2004), in the last centuries it has been marginalised and it is assumed that matters of sexuality do not belong to the public sphere.

This comes as a consequence of the heteronormative and patriarchal systems that have permeated research and development projects in practice and theory (Lind, 2013). Therefore, these issues are not included in the design of public policies and international programmes (Sheill, 2006; Lind, 2008). With that in mind, the next section explores the nascent introduction of sexuality into the development arena.

Sexuality studies in international development

The entrance of sexuality into the international development domain occurred at the beginning of the 1990s (Sheill, 2006; Kollman and Waits, 2009; Corrêa and Parker, 2004; Johnson, 2016), but its entrance was not easy. The first time that sexuality issues were mentioned was during the International Conference of Development and Population in Cairo in 1994 (Petchesky, 2000a), which was considered too much sex on the agenda for the conservative participants (Corrêa, 2002). However, it was not until the Beijing conference in 1995 when sexuality was addressed as an issue relevant to international development (Corrêa, 2002). Nevertheless, during that conference the subject of sexual rights were more focused on reproductive rights of women than on sexual rights, with topics such as sex education, protection against pregnancy, rape, disease and violence. The misunderstanding about what sexual rights means has generated a debate about the difference in definition between reproductive and sexual rights. This is a consequence of the essentialism underpinning issues of sexual rights from a westernised perspective (Steans, 2015), rooted in heteronormativity (Stocks, 2015) and embedded in fixed identities (Corrêa, Perchesky and Parker, 2008), in which women are understood just as reproductive bodies in the international development domain (Lind, 2009).

Therefore, a debate emerged among these scholars of sexuality and human rights, questioning if this topic should be considered within the domain of international development and how sexuality has an influence on the everyday life of people across the world since it is not a basic need such as hunger or

education. On the one hand, it is important to highlight that institutions regulate these practices and states, therefore they cannot be considered as private; they are political concerns (Lind, 2010). In addition, sexuality as part of the everyday human experience (Jolly, 2000) should be considered within the framework of human rights (Sheill, 2006). On the other hand, Petchesky (2000b) argues that the needs-rights dichotomy has to be eradicated, because it creates a hierarchy of needs, with the result that some needs are subordinated to others, when actually both of them are equally important and interdependent. Thus, this was an obstacle to taking sexuality into account in the area of international development and it is still far from being appropriately integrated.

Moreover, another obstacle for the holistic inclusion of sexuality within international development has been the hypervisibilisation of HIV/AIDS, which reproduces the heteronormative system and dualism within the global development industry, through moral assumptions which link HIV/AIDS with non-normative sexual practices, such as MSM (men who have sex with men) and sex work. In addition, this moral assumption is related to the idea in which men are more sexually active than women (Lind, 2010), hence they are more likely to have HIV/AIDS. Thus, sexuality issues have been reduced only to topics related to women's body capabilities or HIV/AIDS, rather than considering sexuality in a holistic way, as a part of life, taking into account pleasure, sexual orientation and other elements of sexuality.

In 2007, there was another step towards the inclusion of sexuality in the international development arena with the creation of the Yogyakarta principles. This declaration was created to include LGBTQ rights in the framework of human rights, ensuring equal rights for all people. However, these principles were designed by gender mainstreaming specialists, and consequently their creation is embedded in structural gender roles. In addition, the principles are considered essentialist due to their perpetuation of the dichotomies, which tend to be heteronormative/homonormative. Thus, the inclusion was not

comprehensive and this document has not been very successful in fulfilling sexual rights (Waites, 2009), because some sexual minorities that are not identified as homosexual or lesbian were not included in the Yogyakarta principles, reproducing marginalisation.

In summary, even though the field of international development has made some efforts to include sexual minorities, with recent calls to improve access to rights and equal opportunities in countries labelled as developing such as Mexico, there is still not enough research about sexuality issues, specifically of lesbians and bisexual women, and their experiences are relatively marginalised in this area of study, later in this chapter, I dedicated a section to address the few studies existing for Mexico and Latin America about sexuality, development and lesbian and bisexual women. Similarly, LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, working with development agencies and the international community, are themselves implicated in reproducing some of the dynamics that undermine a full and fruitful understanding of gender and sexuality issues by reproducing gender ideologies that have historically marginalised both women and non-normative sexualities. Given that these NGOs are crucial to the development of better gender and sexuality politics, the fact that they reproduce problematic power dynamics is very concerning and something that these thesis hopes to address.

Political participation and NGOs

Political participation is relevant as a practice of any political system, and it is fundamental to democratic systems (van Deth, 2016). Understandings of what constitutes political participation have been met with much debate, with different political aspects such as citizenship, social movements and direct democracy being considered as part of the construction of the functioning democratic state (Bevir, 2010). The main aim of this section is to discuss political participation and assess a variety of

perspectives that will inform my research. In particular, this section considers Non-Governmental Organisations (hereafter NGOs) as organisations that are part of and foster political participation.

The concept of political participation is understood as an activity of civil society that affects politics, according to a loose definition by van Deth (2001). However, it implies several different kinds of activities at different levels and from different actors in society, organised in distinct ways, provoking numerous approaches to define and grasp political participation.

Some of the basic elements of political participation needed to develop the concept are that it is directly related to democracy, works as part of a process of the political system, and its principal aim is to claim political rights (Ghosh, 2009; van Deth, 2016). Therefore, citizens use a mechanism against the abuses of the government (van Deth, 2016). Thus, political participation is a tool for citizens to govern themselves (Ghosh, 2009). Therefore, democracy, citizenship and political participation are intertwined, but interact together in different ways.

The traditional idea of political participation was related directly to the vote and other activities such as demonstrations (Salisbury, 1975; Cornwall, 2004; Norris, 2007; Bevir 2010; van Deth, 2014; van Deth, 2016), which are considered as citizens rights in 'normal' politics within a democratic system. For example, Milbrath (1965) said, the politics of non-governmental organizations are excluded from this definition [of political participation]" (p. 1). I consider that this has hanged given that the importance of NGOs has increased since the creation of the UN and afterwards with the NGO-isation within democracies in the 1990s (Alvarez, 1999). Thus, nowadays, NGOs are relevant for democratisation. This is because they are fundamental political actors, and their work bridges civil society and government, for example to claim rights and advance specific agendas. Therefore, it is noticeable that the concept of political participation and the way in which it is applied in research of political sciences is changing and considering new factors by current socio-historical context. Verba

and Nie (1987) defined political participation as "those activities by private citizens that are more directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take" (p. 2). This definition makes clear that political participation is undertaken by civil society to challenge the status quo of the government (van Deth, 2014), but without a specific definition of what political participation implies.

After the Second World War the idea of political participation was expanded with the creation of new organisations (Norris, 2007), making it more complex to define specifically. In addition to this phenomenon, the changing social context started to see different social interactions that are related to affecting politics, but outside of the traditional idea of political participation related to voting. Rather, it was on an individual level, or outside of the institutional sphere, such as, for instance, social networks, boycotts of brands and non-governmental associations and institutions with all kinds of agendas to influence state politics, which is called by contemporary scholars 'slacktivism' (Christensen, 2011; Kristofferson, White and Peloza, 2014) as a loose form of participation. In the specific case of NGOs, they are considered unconventional forms of political participation; however, they play an important role, looking to attend to specific agendas and concerns of civil society. Their importance is seen in their capacity to link matters and issues of the people and address them to the government. In contrast to organisations that are more radical, NGOs have a level of institutionalism, which allows a direct dialogue with government.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that in spite of the gap in traditional theories of political participation in considering NGOs as a political activity, nowadays they are important political actors that contribute and impact policy makers and public policy, helping democratisation (Ghosh, 2009). Hence, in this specific case, the concept of political participation that fits best is any activity, individual or collective devoted to influencing the collective life of the polity" (Macedo in van Deth,

2016, p. 11). Therefore, it is relevant to mention that NGOs are considered as a way of political participation, because despite they are not perfect, they are the main venue to address LGBTQ agendas in Mexico and as consequence improve the situation of LGBTQ community, including lesbians and bisexual women.

NGOs in Mexico

The term 'non-governmental organisations' was used for the first time in Article 17 of the 1945 United Nations Charter. This is considered the official recognition of these sorts of institutions (Clarke, 1998) that were dedicated especially to development issues after the Second World War (Muñoz-Marquez, 2014). Even though there is a current debate about the definition of NGOs, Clarke (1998) defines them as "private, non-profit, professional organisations, with a distinctive legal character, concerned with public welfare goals". He goes on to note that "[i]n the developing world, NGOs include philanthropic foundations, church development agencies, academic think-tanks and other organisations focusing on issues such as human rights, gender, health, agricultural development, social welfare, the environment, and indigenous people" (pp. 36–37).

The relationship between NGOs and social movements is close, because they have common aims to modify the status quo throughout civil society (Lopes de Souza, 2013). This relationship has been polarised, considering social movements, on one hand, as emancipatory groups that are totally independent of the state, while on the other hand NGOs are considered as organisations that tend to be dependent on different bodies and agencies, which undermines the emancipatory idea of them (Lopes de Souza, 2013). Nevertheless, this position essentialises the concepts of NGOs and social movements, while it is necessary to think about both as social organisations on different levels, which

have a relationship and are developed in a socio-historical process in a parallel way, helping to build civil society.

The popularisation of NGOs began during the 1970s and 1980s, especially in developing countries, because international development agencies were focused on these areas of the world. In Mexico NGOs started to have a presence at the end of the 1970s after the students movement in 1968, an event which modified the composition of social actors, as well as their ways of acting towards the political system in the country. Hence, the students' movement was a stepping-stone of a different kind of organisation to something more structured: NGOs (Zu Chen, 2014; Tarrés, 1996). However, the upsurge of NGOs occurred in 1990s with the process of neo-liberalisation and democratisation (Brumley, 2010). Thus, NGOs were considered a tool of social change, as a vehicle of social change, as well as intermediary bodies between people and the state (Alvarez, 1999).

In Mexico, NGOs are committed to different development issues. The UN database has registered 263, with different aims such as human rights, poverty, people living on the streets, revindication of indigenous people, health issues, gender and women's issues, as well as sexuality, among others (UN ECOSOC, 2017). The majority are linked with topics of development issues and associated with the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the NGOs are more centralised in the cities than in the rural regions, unless goals are related to a specific socio-demographic area (Brumley, 2010).

In the specific case of gender/women's NGOs, there are 17 organisations registered in Mexico, according to UN data (UN ECOSOC, 2017). Gender/women's NGOs emerged at the end of the 1970s, in the framework of the UN's Decade for Women. In 1980 there was a proliferation of the movement and finally in 1990s was the boom of the institutionalisation of the women s movement (Chen 2014, Alvarez 1999). The UN conference of Beijing was a platform for access to the public sphere and the political agenda, which had been inaccessible for women in the previous decades. Thus,

women s NGOs became platforms of access to the public sphere for women, as well as spaces to foster women s participation. In addition, it is important to highlight that in those organisations, women are the leaders (Tarrés, 1996).

Sexual rights and NGOs

Studies about sexual rights in Latin America are abundant. In this section I analyse studies which are directly related with NGOs. In other words, I consider studies that address topics such as social movements and public policy, as part of a whole process in which LGBTQ NGOs are involved in some way.

De la Dehesa (2010) talks about sexual policy in Latin America, discussing specifically the sexual rights situation. First, he analyses how public policy has been changing in Latin America over recent decades, highlighting the debates about institutionalisation of this issue. Second, the author points out the debates and issues within the discourse of sexual rights. In addition, he highlights that the discourse tends to focus exclusively on health rights and/or HIV, with the result that women's issues are hidden. Instead of a conclusion, the book brings in different perspectives to address sexuality issues in Latin America and highlights the importance of civil society as actors which can hold public policy accountable regarding sexual rights.

The second work is more specific. Carrillo (2007) discusses the effects on the imaginary of the people in Guadalajara (in Mexico), of some policies made in Mexico City related to issues of sexuality (law against homophobia, same sex marriage). He analyses specifically the perception of people in a space in which sexuality and sex related topics in Mexico frequently acquire enormous symbolic meaning as representations of the country levels in this matter" (Carillo, 2007, p. 86). The main argument is that there is a direct relationship between institutions and the ideology of the people, so institutions

are constructing and modifying the framework of culture and social practices. Moreover, Carrillo (2007) highlights how political actors such as NGOs and other organised groups are fundamental to challenging the status quo as well as ideologies in order to generate social and cultural changes. In conclusion, he suggests that it is important to consider processes of cultural and social change by means of health and education campaigns.

In the same line as the previous paper, Sánchez Olvera (2009) analyses the changes in people s perception about sexuality, considering that in Mexico sexuality is not seen in the social imaginary as a right or as part of the human experience. Therefore, the aim of the paper is to discuss the different existing struggles in the cultural sphere by means of the social dynamics to grasp sexuality as a right. This qualitative research, based on interviewing people of different ages (18–60 years old), analyses participants perception of sexuality as a right. His findings are that new generations have a better understanding of sexuality as a right and with fewer religious ideas attached to it. In conclusion, the paper proposes that the recognition of sexual rights is a process, which takes time and effort. Hence, it is necessary to involve civil society actors such as NGOs, as they are fundamental to generating changes with specific agendas for sexual rights.

Finally, Lind and Arguello (2009) and Amuchástegui (2007) talk about the relationship between gender/sexuality and citizenship. First, Lind and Arguello (2009) discusses how the idea of citizenship has been changing in Latin America from the movements in the 1990s, which made the matter of sexuality more visible in the region. The essay highlights how liberal democracies are heteronormative, causing issues with LGBTQ citizenship. Finally, it addresses the tensions of citizenship, which is understood as a fixed identity which does not match with sexual identities that are fluid (queer identities). In addition, Amuchástegui (2007) explores the cultural and social construction of sexuality in different parts of Mexico through in-depth interviews with men and women of rural and urban

areas. She reports similar findings to Sánchez Olvera (2009) in which younger generations talk more openly about sexuality and grasp in some way its importance in people's everyday lives. The paper concludes that these changes provide some ideas to construct sexual citizenship as a democratic practice, in which it is not only a relationship between the person and the state, but an interaction that implies social, cultural and economic aspects interwoven. Thus, this subsection helps to grasp the situation of sexual rights in Mexico and Latin America, helping to have a better understanding of the dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs. In addition, this summary and context demonstrate two things. First, the role of the State is crucial in the access to sexual rights of LGBTQ people, therefore NGOs' function is important in achieving the visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women. Second, despite the efforts to visibilise sexuality matters, there is little to no scholarship addressing the internal dynamics of the LGBTQ movement inside of the institutionalisation in Mexico**.**

Gender and women's NGOs

Even though NGOs have been an important topic within development studies and in other social sciences, such as sociology and political science, because of the institutionalisation of social movement, studies about gender NGOs in Mexico and Latin America are sparse at best.

Within the studies found in respect to this topic, Narayanaswamy (2014) makes a critique of approaches used to address issues of gender NGOs in the Global South through the analysis of the category of Southern women s NGOs". She argues that the perspective used by stakeholders is still being westernised despite the Black, Third World and postcolonial feminist theory that is available within development studies. The research suggests in conclusion the consideration of alternative paradigms by the NGOs, as well as bearing in mind the hegemonic discursive impact of the concept of Southern women s NGOs".

In the case of Latin America research, Alvarez (1999) analyses how the surge in women s NGOs has resulted in intergovernmental organisations seeing them as gender experts or as intermediaries of people and state, instead citizens looking for the reivindication of women´s rights. Thus, the analysis concludes that gender NGOs are institutionalised, meaning that they serve the state needs, leaving aside the aims and goals that are needed to transform power relations between men and women. In other words, NGOs have depolitising and deracializing effects on political movements. Therefore, according to Alvarez these organisations are not achieving the aim of social change.

Afterwards, Alvarez (2009) discusses in a new paper some considerations about how and why it is necessary to go beyond the NGO-isation of the women s movement in Latin America. In this research, the argument regarding the ineffectiveness of NGOs in Latin America is reaffirmed, saying that feminism is a dynamic movement which is changing through time and is being reconfigured by internal and external factors. Consequently, the rigidity of NGOs does not fit with the Latin American women s movement. In this sense, Alvarez (2009) agrees with the idea that strategies devised on the part of progressive legal and social movements thus run the risk of being turned against those very movements by virtue of extending state power, specifically legal power, over the issues in question" (Butler, 1997, pp. 23–24).

Finally, studies related directly with Mexican gender/women's NGOs are focused on how these spaces promote the access of women to the public domain, which is contrary to Alvarez's (1999) argument. First, Tarrés (1996) offers an overview of women's NGOs in Mexico, describing constituent characteristics of the organisations to analyse which features have influence in shaping the sort of women who are involved in NGOs, and why they decide to participate there. All the research was carried out by means of interviews with leaders of women s NGOs. The main finding is that women look forward to working in these kinds of organisations, considering them as a platform to have access

to public space because they can build an identity and loyalty among the women working there. Moreover, the majority of women who work in the NGOs are looking to improve the rights and opportunities of women in the country or region (depending on the kind of scope of the NGO).

Second, Chen (2014) analysed the participation of women in Mexico in women's NGOs, specifically of young women (nineteen to twenty-nine years old) in Mexico City. The study showed that the role of feminist institutions is fundamental for consciousness-raising and political mobilisation. Therefore, these institutions in academia as well as in civil society are an important reference point for the development of young feminist activists. However, within the NGOs there are still hierarchical relations of power, not because of gender, but rather because of age, class, status, education and knowledge about feminism, in which older feminists have a higher status in the NGOs. In conclusion, the results of the study were in complete contrast to the assumption that the institutionalisation of the women s movement leads to the demobilisation and depoliticisation of the women.

As a summary, NGOs in Mexico (and Latin America) are being used as bridges between women and the public sphere. Nevertheless, they reproduce other sorts of hierarchical power relations such as age and knowledge, despite the efforts to generate solidarity and identity from the NGOs. In addition, they are still westernised and to some extent they are seen as ineffective institutions that are not helping to achieve social change in gender issues from the roots (Alvarez, 2009). Therefore, this review of the literature helped to this research to show some of the different perspectives regarding the perception of NGOs regarding women and gender in the global south, corroborating that these spaces for women are necessary for the NGOs arena, even though they are serving to interests of the heteropatriarchal and neoliberal system, as I develop in my discussion chapter.

LGBTQ NGOs

Studies regarding LGBTQ and NGOs in Mexico are not sufficient to explain how these institutions are constructed in terms of their dynamics and power relations, nor to explain the implication of gender and sexuality relationship involved in LGBTQ institutions in Mexico. Therefore, all the works reviewed here are not only about NGOs but also closely linked to these social actors. In addition, it is important to highlight that the available information found about the topic shows that there are no studies focused exclusively on Mexico LGBTQ NGOs.

Figari (2010) analysed the institutionalisation of the LGBTQ movement in Latin America. The aim of his research was to evaluate the current conflict in the process of public policy creation that is advocated by LGBTQ groups. This was done by challenging whether the process of creation is competent to create public policies in which the needs of the LGBTQ collective really fit, and if these policies are able to transform the reality. This research is different to previous studies and existent literature in the sense that it is looking to analyse the process, instead of focusing on the results of public policy. The conclusion of the paper is the imperative necessity to look for policies which solve issues such as cultural homophobia, instead of continuing to create mainstreaming policies that do not transform the issues from the roots. Because, as I mentioned before in the context, gender mainstreaming policies have not achieved any kind of transformation of inequalities related to matters of gender or sexuality, due to the discursive approach being left aside (True, 2015).

Friedman (2009) examines the relationship between left wing governments and their actions towards women and LGBTQ rights in Latin America. First, she makes a historical overview of the situation, and then compares four countries in this region (Brazil, Bolivia, Chile and Venezuela), reviewing the policies that have been implemented regarding LGBTQ and women rights in relation to the ideology

of the government. She finds that the entry of women to the political sphere did not imply that they were visibilised and considered automatically in the public space.

The paper talks specifically about female representation, which does not suggest consideration of the feminist agenda. For example, one of the more common policies is related to micro credits for women, which are highly controversial because they tend to essentialise the role of women, taking for granted that they only belong to the domestic sphere with no access to economical resources. In consequence this reinforces problematic gender ideologies and also excludes experiences of women who are not in the domestic sphere. These sorts of policies run the risk of thinking that their impact challenges the foundations of gender inequalities, while actually they are just temporal measures that transform the specific lives of a targeted group of women. Therefore, the problem, which is embedded in cultural structures, is not solved, and gender inequalities still exist – in this case, unequal wages.

Moreover, the paper shows how the left wing does not necessarily consider gender and sexuality issues. Even though they tend to support more than the right wing in some cases, it is not generalisable. The agenda of the left tends to be associated with progressive views in all the different social and political issues, including women's and LGBTQ rights, understanding that their agendas are going to include these issues. However, this paper demonstrates that left-right divisions in these specific countries are not related to the ability of the state to respond to the needs of women and LGBTQ rights.

The next two investigations are comparative studies between Mexico and another Latin American country. In the first of them, de la Dehesa (2010) examined the relationship between sexual rights and the state, making a comparison between Brazil and Mexico. In this study, she argued the importance of sexuality NGOs in Mexico, but referring specifically to the HIV/AIDS organisations without a deeper analysis. However, given that there is limited information about LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, this study is a step forward on the literature of the topic, providing a new framework to do further

research on that matter. In the second one, McGee and Kampwirth (2015) discussed how factors such as democratisation, social movements, neoliberal globalisation and modernity discourse have led to the necessity of incorporating LGBTQ movements into the state. This is done through a comparison between Mexico and Nicaragua, taking into account their socio-political context differences and similarities, such as, for instance, the social revolutions in each country.

Finally, the last study (Mercer, 2004) under consideration here is not in the same geo-historical context, as it was done in Bosnia Herzegovina. However, it is important to highlight it because it develops a very similar study to this research project about LGBTQ NGOs. It analyses the challenges that LGBTQ NGOs faced in Bosnia Herzegovina, taking into account their political process of transition from Yugoslavia to an independent country and all the struggles and issues that it implies. One of the highlights of Mercer's study (2004) is that it aims to make a comparison between NGOs for women s rights and LGBTQ NGOs, analysing their differences and similarities. Thus, its main contribution – which is useful to this research – is that women who identify themselves as part of the LGBTQ community do not feel that they belong to LGBTQ NGOs at the same time and identify more with women's NGOs. Moreover, their economic capacity (disadvantaged) does not allow them to do volunteering, and finally because the agenda of the LGBTQ NGOs is more oriented to AIDS issues that are to some extent more related to gay men.

Lesbians and bisexual women studies

This section is dedicated to studies that have been done on the role of lesbians and bisexual women in public space, taking into account especially social movements and NGOs in Latin America and Mexico. First, I develop studies that are related to the role of lesbians and bisexual women in the public sphere in general, and then I focus more specifically on social movements and NGOs. I do not separate literature in terms of Latin America and Mexico because there is a lack of studies focusing

only in Mexico. Therefore, all the studies selected give us a general idea of what the dynamics of lesbians and bisexual women in public spaces are like in this region of the world.

The first study that will be reviewed is a report on human rights and lesbians in Paraguay in 2006 (Posa Guinea, Robledo Desh and Zabala Peroni, 2010). This report has as its principal aim to demonstrate how women s sexual orientation has an influence on their economic, social and cultural rights, as well as political and civil rights. It is divided into five sections; in each one it develops and provides examples of how lesbians face different types of discrimination and how they do not have access to rights in diverse areas: work, school, health, a life free of violence, and security. In conclusion, they say that it is necessary to develop policy focused specifically on lesbians' and bisexual women's issues to ensure their access to rights in all their spheres. Consequently, they have to look for spaces to have access to the public sphere.

The following study (Friedman, 2010) analyses the spaces in which Latin American lesbians are involved, and how non-physical spaces have become fundamental networks for them, not only for activism, but also as safe spaces from discrimination. The study states that cyber space has provided a new way to develop networks, although the author notes some disadvantages such as access to the internet in many regions of Latin America. Thus, this tool excludes part of the community. Friedman (2010) analyses a sample of a number of lesbians' organisations from different countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico and Chile. She concludes that even though omissions and divisions exist, the internet has great potential to create communities in societies in which is difficult or dangerous to assert lesbian identity. In addition, given the hindrances to lesbians to organise themselves in the region, online spaces dedicated to the community are extremely useful and vital in order to organise themselves socially and politically outside the public space.

Thayer's (2010) study analyses how the lesbian social movement has developed in the last fifty years in two countries of Central America: Costa Rica and Nicaragua. This movement is also part of how lesbians and bisexual women have found the way to be visibilised in political spaces. The chapter places this social movement in the new genre of social movements, which are represented by resisting growing threats to personal autonomy and are constructed under new strategies of action, such as direct democracy and horizontal organisation. In addition, throughout the chapter in the book the author compares how lesbian (and gay) movements were built in both countries, and their differences and hindrances due to their political, social and economic context. The study highlights that lesbians have fewer economic opportunities than gay men to develop collective action, and that lesbians were not considered as allies of the feminist movement. Therefore, although the women's movement was growing in those countries, the concerns of lesbians were left unspoken. In conclusion, lesbians as a social movement are still invisible within social movements and they have to act aside of the dominant society.

In a similar way to Thayer (2010), Hinojosa (2001) in her conference paper develops the historical context of the presence of lesbians in the public space in Mexico. The paper outlines the history of lesbians in the second half of the 20th century, and their invisibility and entrance into the political sphere. Moreover, Hinojosa (2001) relates how that situation has been changing throughout the years and decades, achieving objectives of visibility in the national and international public sphere. The paper emphasises that in spite of all the visiblisation on the part of international actors such as the UN and their access to some rights and spaces in Mexico, it is necessary to add their agenda, issues, and concerns to the discourse of human rights and to ensure their access to economic independence by means of the right to have a formal job. As a conclusion, Hinojosa (2001) says that inclusion of lesbians has to be made through the apolitical agenda of lesbian organisations, considering the current

context of the country. It is clear that the situation regarding lesbians in Mexico has changed in 50 years, and their presence and visibility has increased.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to say that their visibility is still being largely overlooked. For example, she says that in the 1990s lesbian visibility was dependent on the UN, and they visibilised them, although the sexual rights and lesbian agendas specifically had a setback in the Beijing conference in 1995 (Buss, 2004). Studies such as Valencia Toledano and Romero Hernandez (2017), and Thayer (2010) are still calling for the visibilisation of lesbians and their specific agenda. Therefore, it is important to say that the situation has changed over 50 years, but it is necessary to make clear that lesbians and bisexual women do not have access to sexual rights.

Within the literature reviewed, there are only two studies which talk about the dynamics of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs. The first one is a report (Falú, 2005) which addresses the labour discrimination of lesbians and bisexual women in four Latin American countries (Colombia, Bolivia, Mexico and Honduras) from a human rights perspective. The section focused on NGOs says that lesbians working in LGBTQ NGOs are more likely to live free of discrimination in their work in comparison to heteronormative institutions, and they prefer to work there despite receiving lower wages than in other sectors of the labour market. In addition, they are interested in challenging traditional gender/sexuality rules and promoting social change to improve the lives of the LGBTQ collective. While this argument has some merit in demonstrating that there are positive effects of women working in these types of NGOs, my thesis goes further to interrogate the ways in which heteropatriarchal structures are implicated within these organisations. Indeed, this thesis seeks to demonstrate how these organisations are situated within a context where heteropatriarchal logics are subtly absorbed and naturalised.

Regarding Mexico specifically, two studies constitute the core investigations to visibilise the lesbian movement in this region. Both have the main objective of visibilising the lesbian struggle in the country. First Morgovejo (2000) from a sociological perspective analyses with a Foucaldian perspective of archaeology" of the events, archives and experiences of lesbians. This is done by means of interviews with lesbian leaders in the movement in Mexico in the period of 1971–1995. Thus, all the information collected is used as a tool to reflect upon theoretical debate that analyses lesbians as social actors. The highlight of this work is that at the end it compares the movement with different countries of Latin America: Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. This is the first research that focused on the lesbian movement in Mexico.

More recently, Fuentes Ponce (2015) makes a historical compilation of the same movement. This has its basis in interviews with the principal figures of the movement in Mexico, including not only the history of the movement, but also the personal experiences of the lesbians within the movement. It represents a new point of view that complements Morgovejo (2000) to provide a broader and more complete view of the lesbian movement. In addition, it analyses and criticises the different struggles inside the movement and the differences, similarities and meeting points with the gay and feminist movements.

Finally, there is a policy paper (Valencia Toledano y Romero Hernández, 2017), which talks specifically about the invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs with the aim of visibilising the necessity of creating public policy especially for them. It analyses the place of lesbian feminists in social movements and their political position in the Mexican context. This research's principal aim is to reflect on lesbian activism from a feminist and intersectional perspective, trying to visibilise the necessity for the recognition of their rights. This is done through interviews, seeking to know the dynamics to access resources and the agenda of lesbians in different organisations. The

findings point out that they face structural problems of violence and lack of recognition of their contributions or find that their contributions are minimised. As a conclusion, they consider it necessary to construct different autonomous spaces, separate from gay men and heterosexual women, to make possible the visibilisation of their own issues and concerns. Therefore, they conclude that lesbian rights are subordinated to gay men's and heterosexual women's rights.

There are some points that cut across and are embedded in several papers about how lesbians and bisexual women do not feel that they belong to any of the movements (feminist or LGBTQ). On one hand, feminist movements tend to think about heteronormativity as part of the identity of women; therefore all the agenda initiatives and aims are related to the health and violence issues faced by heterosexual women. On the other hand, gay men – who are historically more recognised in the public space than lesbians and bisexual women – dominate LGBTQ organisations and movements (Morgovejo, 2000; Ward, 2008; Fuentes Ponce, 2015). Hence, they impose their agenda, aims and interests within their spaces, leaving lesbians and bisexual women hidden or on the margin of organisations. Thus, lesbians and bisexual women have the necessity of creating their own spaces outside of the sphere of women's and LGBTQ movements; in consequence, it is clear that lesbian rights are subordinated to gay men's and heterosexual women's rights.

The fact that lesbians and bisexual women do not have a sense of belonging to these spaces shows that they are not considered in the same way as heterosexual women and gay men. Moreover, there is a lack of political commitment to their agendas in spaces which are also designed for them as sexual minorities.

Challenging the institutionalisation of social movements and political participation

Throughout this entire chapter, I have outlined the different studies and research done in the field of NGOs and social movements with specific socio-historical context grounded in Latin America or the Global South. However, I consider it necessary to produce a brief literature review of the other side of the discourse on NGOs, which denies that these organisations are helping to change social matters to improve the situation of people in any kind of social disadvantage. Thus, this section is allowing a critical view of these institutions that challenges the achievement of their aims, as well as showing their limitations and the shifting of intentions that have existed over the years. In addition, I address the non-institutionalised lesbian-feminist movement that has criticised from the outset NGOs to give a whole overview of the discourses questioning these organisations. Furthermore, the inclusion of literature discussing the lesbian-feminist movement is imperative, because it helps to make sense of the relevance of women creating their own spaces.

Petras (1997) discusses how the NGOs serving during the period of dictatorships in Latin America were helping despite the limitations that they faced; however, NGOs were quickly co-opted by Western foundations, provoking the shift of their transformative objectives. The paper emphasises the importance of differentiating social movements from NGOs, because the latter work more as entrepreneurs than as actors of civil society, aiming to improve good governance. Rahman (2006) agrees with this position about the shift of the NGOs. He challenges the role of NGOs in the same tone, affirming that they passed from agents of social mobilisation to serve as a delivery paradigm, concluding that despite the failure of NGOs as transformative agents, there are still possibilities to avoid negative political effects on these organisations.

Similarly, Kamat (2003) states that donors are responsible for the shifting in NGOs' aims because organisations have to fit their agendas with the specific interest of donors, using neoliberal measures such as microcredits as the most common strategy. In the same line, within the field of feminism in Latin America, Alvarez (1998) reaffirms this idea, in which the main responsibility of the co-optation of NGOs belongs to international donors, due to NGOs having the unavoidable necessity of requiring money from donors to carry on with their activities. However in the end, these activities are only workshops, which allow agendas to align with the system, In other words the practices of the NGOS end up being gender mainstreaming practices, which are not transformative. Ewig (1999) offers a good example of how NGOs lost their transformative aim. She analyses the specific case of Nicaragua, where NGOs were shaping state policy, but passed from helping to being stuck and not working, reinforcing the arguments of previous papers that highlight the issue of funding.

In contrast, Kamat (2004) explains that NGOs do not play an innocent role; it is predictable that they were going to merge in the end with global capitalist interests. Therefore, the shift was planned since their creation. In this sense Fisher (1997) concludes that NGOs are adaptive to the changing conditions, drawing on her analysis of the relationship of the ethics and politics of NGOs. In addition, Miraftab (1997) in an analysis of Mexican NGOs during the second half of the 20th century affirms that the failure of the NGOs is related to the constant changes of objectives and funding. All these papers show how governance dynamics were changing over the decades, whereby the non-state actors passed from being passive organisations to powerful actors in world politics modifying the power and authority of the state (Sending and Neumann, 2006).

Studies on LGBTQ NGOs agree with criticisms about the failure of NGOs as transformative actors of civil society. Williams and Giuffre (2011) discuss how US workplaces – including organisations – have been become gay-friendly; however, they only are friendly" to homonormative identities that

fit in the canon, specifically cis-gays and cis-lesbians. Here Williams and Giuffre (2011) make an important critique affirming that queer" and organisation" cannot be compatible because organisations are based on hierarchies and fixed structures, which are contrary to one of the main statements of the queer proposal regarding fluidity, affirming that if non-profit organisations are called queer, this is merely to take advantage of the funding, sharing a stance with Ward (2008), who produces a rich analysis of the co-optation of non-profit LGBTQ organisations due to funding. Ward's research is done with three NGOs in Los Angeles as cases of study, in which she analyses the relationships between social justice, diversity and the political-economic process. Concluding that diversity is sellable, Ward (2008) shows how neoliberalism has permeated all organisations, including queer ones, which were supposed to be the most subaltern and on the margins.

Hence, on different levels and from different perspectives, the thread of this section shows that the principal aim of NGOs, which is to help to develop the equality of the most vulnerable groups, has failed. However, the general perception of these papers is that NGOs have not just failed, but rather, they are serving the interest of the neoliberal and homo/hetero normative system, helping to explain the fact that many NGOs in Mexico, which are not aligned with neoliberal dynamics, face hindrances such as being banned from funding. In other words, NGOs that do not fit into the HIV/AIDS agenda, pink market/economy, reproductive rights, microcredits or any other programme in this line have few possibilities to find funding to carry on their projects, with the result that those NGOs fail, whereas, social movements such as the autonomous feminist and lesbian-feminist movements exist that are against NGOs because they agree with the idea that those institutions are co-opted by neoliberalist system and they are ineffective.

Autonomous feminist and lesbian-feminist movements in Latin America

At the same time as feminist and LGBTQ NGOs were appearing in Latin America, other groups of feminist women were organising politically (Morgovejo, 2010), but as a contra-hegemonic movement (Falquet, 2014) outside of institutionalisation, claiming visibilisation but without the framework enforced by the agenda of donors and international organisations (Rivera-Lopez, 2009). This subsection aims to outline briefly some studies that have contributed to the autonomous feminist movement as the counterpart of institutionalised movements and/or institutions. Taking into account this branch of feminism within this investigation is crucial for two reasons. First, the autonomous lesbian-feminist movement is closely related to the core matter of my research, which is the dynamics of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs. Thus, literature encompassing the way in which lesbians choose to organise themselves is absolutely necessary. Second, the lesbian autonomous movement has been a benchmark of the feminist movement in Latin America; therefore, it is necessary to bring it into discussions about feminist movements nowadays (Rivera-Lopez, 2009).

The study of Falquet (2014) produced a historical paper, which examines the visibilisation of the feminist autonomous movement. The author emphasises the necessity of researching these movements to diminish the lack of legitimation and visibilisation of autonomous women's movements as contra-hegemonic proposals. The legitimation in autonomous women's movements tends to be harder given its non-institutionalisation, which also results in a lack of archives to develop a deeper historical investigation, provoking a cycle of invisibilisation-legitimation. Falquet (2014) uses the experiences of different collectives in different countries of Latin America from the last 20 years to show their perspective regarding the construction of spaces outside of institutional movements, challenging the dynamics of NGOs that are shaped by hegemonic institutions and economic systems. Therefore, the paper highlights the relevance of recognising the production of knowledge from

autonomous groups that are also based in the Global South. The author criticises and challenges the hegemonic knowledge of the Global North in NGOs, affirming that despite this lack of information it is necessary to dig deeper within those movements. Rivera-Lopez (2009), following the same aim as Falquet (2014), develops a historical paper about the relevance of the journal/magazine La correa Feminista' dedicated to feminist matters in Mexico and Latin America with the objective of visibilising the autonomous movement. The author does this by means of the experiences and memories of her interviewees who were collaborating on the magazine. The argument of the paper goes through the contribution to the feminist movement from outside of the institutions, as well as how their radical political position provoked their marginalisation.

In addition to these studies, Malnis (2019) develops a more focused paper, which explores a more specific part of the feminist autonomous movement, the lesbian separatist movement. This scholar develops a cartography of lesbians' experiences, claiming the need for their visibilisation, because lesbian experiences have been obscured, given that the hegemony of hetero-feminist and LGBTQ NGOs has marginalised these groups. Malnis (2019) challenges the strength of the LGBTQ and feminist movements to analyse in depth the invisibilisation of lesbians in non-institutionalised movements. The paper closes by highlighting the relevance of looking at these groups because they are the ones challenging the canon within the LGBTQ and feminist movement nowadays.

Similarly, Morgovejo (2010) paper, which supports the lack of legitimation of autonomous lesbian-feminist movements, affirms that these spaces are the only alternative to modify unequal relations and visibilise lesbians and bisexual women. Regarding institutionalised movements, specifically NGOs, Morgovejo (2010) has a radical position, stating that NGOs have damaged social movements since the moment of their creation, and agrees with Kamat (2004) regarding the obvious track in the road of these institutions to serve neoliberalist interests. Consequently, women and more specifically

lesbians as non-reproductive bodies that are outside of male dominance are not the target of the neoliberal project, and therefore their agendas are not relevant to the donors.

Finally, Alcorro-Heredia (2019) produces an investigation from de-colonial and French materialist feminist theories, to explain and discuss the scope of the lesbian-feminist movement, reinterpreting the feminist theory from the South, and supporting the same enquiries and perspectives as previously mentioned works here, in which the feminist movement has been co-opted by NGOs and international organisations and therefore the lesbian-feminist movement is looking for a political project outside of that co-optation to create spaces exclusively for lesbians.

Notwithstanding, it is important to highlight that the lesbian-feminist movement tends to essentialise women's oppression to sex, which causes the exclusion of trans identities from women's exclusive spaces, becoming exclusionary and oppressive, which is the biggest flaw in their contribution to feminist and LGBTQ social movement. This branch of studies helped to frame the different work done about lesbian/feminism separatism in Latin America; however, in the following chapter, I develop a broad and detailed section about the theoretical foundations of this branch of feminism, which is political lesbianism. Moreover, this scholarship has informed my discussion chapter (Chapter six), being part of the basis of the normative position presented there**.**

Conclusion

During this chapter, I examined different studies done around NGOs, social movements and their critics within the arena of feminism and sexuality in Mexico and more broadly, in Latin America, as well as the Global South. The literature suggests first, that political participation and the role of NGOs has a myriad of understandings, with the result that legitimation of those institutions varies and the same phenomenon occurs with the perception of their outcomes to generate changes in society.

Moreover, it shows that to some extent NGOs help to improve the life of populations at risk, but at the same time are fulfilling the agenda and requirements of Western institutions embedded in neoliberalism, as non-institutional movements assert. The studies regarding women affirm that NGOs are a great step forward in breaking the public/private binary of gender. Likewise, LGBTQ studies suggest that there is some progress in the inclusion of LGBTQ people in the State, being legitimated as citizens through law and rights in different regions of Latin America. Regarding studies of lesbians and bisexual women these consist in visibilisation of the conditions when working in NGOs, as well as some hints regarding the needs of construction of their own spaces due to the misogyny of gay men and lesbophobia of heterosexual feminists.

Despite all this literature giving a general picture of the situation regarding the LGBTQ movement and its gender dynamics, there are many gaps that my investigation will fill. First, the majority of studies regarding international development and sexuality have not been applied to specific regions. At the same time, even though there are studies about LGBTQ NGOs in different regions of Latin America and other countries such as Bangladesh or Bosnia Herzegovina considered as the Global South, there are no studies for Mexico. Subsequently, in the more specific field of lesbians and bisexual women's studies in Mexico, research does not exist that analyses the dynamics with other groups within the LGBTQ community, and the existing literature regards the historical movements and their presence in the LGBTQ movement. Finally, the specific reasons why lesbians and bisexual women – and queer identities – are relegated to the bottom of the hierarchy of the LGBTQ movement is the main contribution of this investigation. Hence, in the following chapter, I will argue in detail the different bodies of theory that will inform this research.

CHAPTER TWO

Feminist & queer theory, understanding (in)visibility of lesbians and bisexual women.
Theoretical Chapter

> "I suggest that what we need is a 'feminist version of queer theory', which would see itself not as a set of instantaneous, deconstructive moves but rather as a collection of staggered events and uneven developments that pursue two conflicting goals simultaneously […] This version of queer theory understands finally that without feminism, queer theory will simply be another fight among boys." (Rudy, 2000, pp. 212- 213)

Introduction

This chapter aims to set out the theoretical foundations that inform this research. As noted earlier in this thesis, I am employing two different bodies of theory. This is because of the nature of the project which seeks to explore the intersection of sexuality and gender. As such, I use feminist and queer theories that are interwoven at different levels, by challenging hegemonic social norms and questioning systems of oppression related to gender and sexuality. Together these theoretical positions provide the framework to explain, analyse and grasp the different reasons for and origins of the marginalisation of lesbians and bisexual women within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico that are developed in the empirical sections of this research and which is the core contribution of this research.

Feminist theory on one side underpins the basis of the research on the marginalisation of – lesbians and bisexual – women, given that its groundwork has been leading the analysis of gender inequality and power relations, challenging the unequal relations of power that are embedded in patriarchy. I borrow the gender accounts to sexuality such as Rubin (1984), Scott (1986) and Butler (1990), because they explain the relationship between gender and sexuality and give an understanding of how both social categories are deeply linked to each other, shaping dynamics and organising social relations, and likewise (re)producing marginalisation of lesbians and bisexual women. In particular, I focus on the interesting scholarship relating to lesbian separatism as Rich (1980), Card (1990), Witting (1992) and Rudy (2001). I argue, lesbian separatism goes deeper on this understanding of the discrimination and marginalisation of non-heterosexual women, explaining the relevance of women-only spaces in which women can relate to each other and how these dynamics challenge heteropatriarchal society, including the dynamics of capitalism.

Nevertheless, feminist theory has not developed the theoretical tools to give a deep and total explanation of sexuality oppression, which is related to sexual minorities, sexual orientation and gender identity, as Rudy (2000) states "Queer theory can provide us with interesting visions of a non-gendered, politically progressive world, but only if we recognize the need for feminist analysis as well" (pp. 213 - 214). Therefore, to analyse in a holistic way the marginalisation of lesbians and bisexual women it is necessary to consider queer theory as well, to be able to understand sexuality as one of the core reasons of marginalisation because of sexuality differences. Even though queer theory is not the only body of theoretical knowledge that provides the conceptual means to analyse sexuality, it fits best in this research because its foundations consider intersectional analysis, reflecting non-normative sexualities relying upon other oppressed identities such as class, ethnicity and race, in addition it consider sexual identities that are not fixed, in summary, queer theory is challenging not only normative sexualities, it is also challenging normalcy (Rudy, 2000). In other words, queer theory offers

a useful framework to analyse lesbians and bisexual women in Mexico, because it is possible to consider socio-historical specific considerations, using the specific branch of queer studies in Latin America, for instance, Viteri, Serrano and Vidal Ortiz (2011), Falconi (2014), Valencia (2015), as well as the development around bisexual identities and transgender masculinities, that lesbian and gay scholarship does not address in detail.

In addition, this research untangles and explains how the dynamics and hierarchies within LGBTQ NGOs – and in general the third sector – in Mexico work. Using keystone concepts that are encompassed by queer theory, such as heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity, help to shed light on how society is shaped regarding gender and sexuality matters and then more narrowly using theory on queer spaces and (in)visibility and marginalisation of minorities and socially disadvantaged communities.

For organisation and clarity purposes I have divided the chapter into two main sections, feminist, and queer theory. The feminist section encompasses a feminist account of sexuality, as well as political lesbianism, mentioned above, while the second main section comprises queer theory with its different branches, as well as the conceptual discussion of heteropatriarchy, hetero/homonormativity and (in)visibilisation.

Feminist accounts of sexuality

After the second wave of feminism, a new branch within the discipline emerged with the purpose of analysing the oppression of women as part of the unequal system of gender relations, understanding the nuances and differences between women's oppression by considering historical contexts and other factors such as sexuality. The first critique was related to oppression of women as something universal and general. Gayle Rubin in 1975 in her paper "The traffic in women" challenged the meaning of

patriarchy, in which sex and gender overlap. In other words, the understanding of sex as the set of physiological features of humans shapes their social roles in terms of gender, which is understood as something fixed as it is based on sex. In this way gender ultimately becomes destiny (Osborne and Molina Petit, 2008). Therefore, oppression of women is unavoidable in all social circumstances, not just the social organisation of gender. This universalisation fails to acknowledge the different oppressions that women can face apart from gender. Thus, Rubin (1975) analyses how gender is a system in which women fulfil some characteristics just because of their biological sex, for instance, their gender identity and sexual orientation, while they are signified in a different way depending on the context, defining the gender/sex system as a "set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention and satisfied in a conventional manner, no matter how bizarre some of the conventions may be" (Rubin, 1975, p.159). Therefore, the gender/sex system definition raises the factor of historical context, which is different from the critique of the universal idea of patriarchy and women's oppression, the ahistorical construction of them within feminism.

Joan Scott in 1986 again put forward this argument about the importance of history, because "words like the ideas and things that are meant to dignify, have history" (Scott, 1986, p. 1053). This argument, pioneering in gender studies, works as foundation of the understanding of gender for this branch of scholarship. Scott (1986) understands gender as a social organisation, not only as an identity feature. In other words, this new perspective has the principal aim to challenge the previous conceptions of gender which were only related to women and based on biological determinism. The first argument is the relational construction of gender relations, in which women and men are determined in terms of one another (Scott, 1986); here the influence of post-structuralist philosophy, regarding the relational attribute of signifiers, is evident.

In consequence, Scott (1986) states that it is not possible to think of women's oppression as of only one kind, as gender relations are determined by their own specific context, taking into account elements that are relevant such as race or class, and historical context. In addition, the contribution of Scott (1986) to the analysis and understanding of gender is the use of gender as a category of analysis in politics. Hence, gender is a symbolic system, which is, weighted with power relations that shape culture gender norms; however these relations are not fixed, which is why historical context is relevant when analysing gender relations.

Finally, Judith Butler is the main pioneering scholar in the feminist account of sexuality, who also challenges the idea of gender that was developed by feminist theory, saying that in the end gender was reduced to sex (Butler, 1994) because of biological determinism and understanding sex as something fixed. The theoretical foundations of this scholar's work, as well as that of Joan Scott, are in poststructuralist philosophy. Thus, the author states that gender is constructed through relations of power and specifically normative constraints that not only produce but also regulate bodies (Butler, 2011). Therefore, gender is not only relational but rather is hierarchical. Furthermore, Butler (2011) introduces the concept of performativity, which helps to explain how gender is acquired and normalises cultural gender norms: "It is not a singular deliberate act, but rather the reiterative and citational practise by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (Butler, 2011, p. 2). This contribution helps understand gender beyond the definitions given by feminist theory that universalise oppression and generalise the issues of gender inequality.

Nevertheless, Butler goes further and analyses the understanding of sex, affirming – in the same line as Foucault – that sex is a regulatory practice that is materialised through time. Consequently, in the same way as gender, sex is discursively constructed. Therefore, sex is not fixed and likewise, there is no settled gender identity that support the argument that women are the subject of feminism (Osborne

and Molina Petit, 2008) as Butler (1990) states with the heterosexual matrix – affirming that sex, gender and sexuality follow a pattern in service of the heterosexual imperative – which I develop later in this chapter. The set of contributions by this scholar are the linchpin to studies related to sexuality and especially queer theory by also questioning sexuality from a poststructuralist position and understanding it as something that is not fixed, which will be developed later in this chapter as the basis of sexuality scholarship.

Political lesbianism

The scholars linked to political lesbianism base their analysis in feminist theory, specifically radical feminism which explores the implications of being a lesbian in a heteropatriarchal and phallocentric system. It is relevant to include this branch of feminist thought within the theoretical framework, because as Rudy (2001) affirms, one of the contributions of radical feminism "to care and connection should be carried over to the new queer communities" (p. 219); therefore it is used in this research as is the basis or foundation of newer schools of thought such as queer theory. In addition, it is pertinent because the principal subjects of study are lesbians and some of their experiences are related to lesbianism not just as an orientation of desire, but more to a political understanding of being lesbians.

The major contribution and statement of this school of thought is the idea of constructing an identity outside of these heteropatriarchal norms. Breaking the relationship with men in which women are rendered as inferior and oppressed by men, as Jeffreys (1999) phrases "outside of the male supremacy", political lesbians consider that the core aim of this political position is to crack heterosexuality. This is reviewed at different levels by different scholars: Lorde (2007) considers that the access to erotic pleasure implies power and only men have access to it because women are considered merely as recipients of desire, objects of it (Armstrong, 1995). Thus, having access to erotic pleasure solely between women (without men) is a transgression to the heteropatriarchal system.

Therefore, heterosexuality is understood as an institution which serves the patriarchal system because it has also embedded a set of norms to be socially approved, such as motherhood, emotional and domestic burdens, that as is known, enhance the oppression of women (Harding, 2016; Rich, 1980; Wittig, 1992), with lesbians being the only subjects who transgress this relationship with men. Besides, they build their own spaces outside of male structures, which is by itself radical, from the lesbian separatism perspective considered as an act of resistance to the heteropatriarchal system. Therefore, when lesbians and bisexual women in the LGBTQ arena look for their own spaces the situation is mirrored, causing discrimination of them. This is, due to the systems of oppression permeate the LGBTQ community, as I address later in this chapter. This situation offers a hint to grasp and analyse the marginalisation of lesbian from LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, given that women-only spaces are less recognised by hegemonic structures because public spaces are understood as belonging to men. Thus, seizing this set of theories and why they were developed, allows us to understand the crucial necessity of those spaces for women and at the same time the rejection by donors and other actors within the LGBTQ scene.

Two main scholars developed the theory of compulsory heterosexuality. On one side is Adrianne Rich, who published an essay in 1980 about the construction of heterosexuality as an institution that must be analysed by feminist scholarship, due to the assumption of heterosexuality as a commonality, which has also permeated feminism with presumptions that hold feminism back (Rich, 1980). This scholar coined two different levels of relationships between women outside of the compulsory heterosexuality, which is her main contribution to feminist scholarship: on the one hand, lesbian existence, which refers to the relevance of historicising and visibilising women to women relationships, which are still necessary to legitimise marginalised lesbian and bisexual women groups; on the other hand, the 'lesbian continuum', which is related to the relationships of women that are not just romantic, but rather all the emotional relationships between women that foster empowerment, which

is more as a way of life, as a political position. The contribution of Rich (1980) consists of grasping heterosexuality not as a preference, but rather as a "thing that had to be imposed, managed, organised, propagandized and maintained by force" (p. 27). Hence the idea of heterosexuality as the most common sexual orientation is related to a norm and obligation to women that serves the heteropatriarchal system.

The second scholar, Wittig (1992), develops the understanding of 'The Straight Mind', which offers a similar argument of compulsory heterosexuality in general. The author says that heterosexuality is taken for granted in heteropatriarchal societies and considered as an obligation that implies not only a sexual preference but rather a set of norms and roles such as motherhood; thus heterosexuality as a "must" is embedded in the social structure. The second main contribution is her understanding of men and women as categories that are relational and hierarchical, in which men are considered superior to women, considering this situation as a system of oppression embedded in the culture. Thus, women experience social pressure to become or follow women's destiny, in a similar way as De Beauvoir (2010) states that women are understood as a product of the system. Thus, Wittig's (1992) argument is that lesbians are not women, because they are not following the predeterminate role of women, and are challenging the system of oppression that is heterosexuality. It is noticeable that this scholar has her theoretical foundations in post-structuralism, bringing in relational categories and understanding lesbians as a construction outside of the binary of men and women. Crowder (2007) affirms that Wittig's approach is the same as that of queer theory because it challenges and undoes the concepts of sex, gender and sexuality.

As part of this reflection about the oppressive character of heterosexuality within patriarchal societies, some lesbian feminists developed the lesbian separatist movement as a space of political resistance (Card, 1990) in the same sense as the lesbian continuum in Rich's (1980) words. They were thought

as exclusively lesbians' spaces because also in spaces of sexual diversity (gay) men exercise power and privilege; therefore lesbian separatism and radical feminism do not consider gay men as allies, despite their sexual orientation (Rudy, 2001).

Nevertheless, in their attempts at building spaces to ensure more equal power relationships, they left aside marginal identities such as black lesbians (Nast, 2002), working-class lesbians and bisexual women, identities which have been stigmatised and discriminated against by lesbians (Hartman, 2006). Those separatist groups were formed by white middle-class (Rudy, 2001) as well as urban lesbians (Jennings, 2018), and including other identities brought them face to face with their own privilege. That situation weakened the movement because the problem of this branch of feminism was the confusion of the condition of one specific group of women with all (Rudy, 2001). In the same vein, Card (1990) as a way of articulation between separatism and intersectionality, developed a reflection about the importance of separatist space but based on oppression rather than dissent. For example, the separatism of women from men given the existent and well-known structural inequalities makes sense to raise the consciousness of the oppressed; but separatism of lesbians from bisexual women[5] is not useful, because it is not trying to visibilise any kind of oppression (From bisexual women to lesbians), consequently there is no reason to support the separation based on dissent (Card, 1990). Lesbian separatism lost its popularity in the 80s for many reasons, but the most relevant was that they never achieved self-sufficiency (Jennings, 2018) outside of the economic system. Moreover, within this understanding of the lesbian continuum raised by Rich (1980), there were two main concerns: motherhood, specifically having boy babies inside of these men-free spaces (Jennings, 2018), as well as the de-erotisation of sexual relationships, because consummation was considered a 'male trick'

[5] I am encompassing cis and trans women that are bisexual or lesbian in my categories, given that the research is not about specific oppression of cis/trans people, despite the pertinence of the discussion of trans women and their exclusion from lesbian and radical feminist spaces, because that discussion requires attention given its own weight.

(Jennings, 2018). Thus lesbian separatism proved to be unsustainable. Finally, the lack of intersectionality (Rudy, 2001) was also a hindrance for lesbian separatism, giving opportunity to other branches of the lesbian movement, such as queer lesbian spaces that considered other identities of women such as race, class, ethnicity, religious beliefs, among others – which I will develop in the following section.

Therefore, lesbian separatism could help to build a basis and understanding about the oppression of women on different levels, such as, for example, the attempts of lesbians and bisexual women to establish NGOs exclusively for them. However, it is necessary to avoid separatism based only on dissent, which provokes the invisibilisation and exclusion of identities that are also marginalised, such as queer identities.

Thus, lesbian separatism points out how heterosexuality is not a sexual orientation of desire, but rather is an institution that serves to privilege not only heterosexuals but also men, constructing the heteropatriarchal system, which was analysed and discussed by Butler (1990) and Rubin (1975) as a heterosexual matrix and sex/gender system (discussed below). This set of theories helps to inform this research because it helps to fill the theoretical gap in understanding why lesbians and bisexual women are left outside of the agenda of LGBTQ movement and NGOs. In addition, this branch of feminism benefits this framework to analyse bisexual women and heterosexual privilege, which will be developed later in this chapter.

Although feminist theory has understandably dominated in debates on gender inequality and gendered power relations, this approach does not entirely explain the oppression of sexual minorities such as lesbians and bisexual women. Therefore, it is necessary to bring in queer theory as well to understand sexuality issues better. These studies emerged in the 1990s as a new perspective that seeks to include minorities, which are left out in lesbian and gay scholarship. It has its basis in post-structuralism and

gender studies, looking to include other identities and systems of oppression given that sexual oppression also cuts across other modes of social inequality (Rubin, 1984). The most important theorists of this school are Diana Fuss and Eve K. Sedgwick, as well as Gayle Rubin and Judith Butler who were mentioned before, all of whose thinking is embedded in Foucault's work on sexuality. There are also other studies by scholars such as Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer, Steve Seidman and Stephen Valocchi, that argued the importance of grasping sexuality within social sciences. Thus, the following section discusses queer theory as part of the body of knowledge informing this research.

Queer theory

Queer theory emerged as a new field of sexuality studies with a basis in selected feminist scholarship (Hall and Jagose, 2012; Jagose, 1996) as well as poststructuralist theory, especially in Foucault's work The History of Sexuality, published for the first time in 1977. In this work, sexuality, similarly to gender, is grasped not as a natural element or fact of human life but rather as a constructed category of experience with historical, social and cultural foundations. Queer theory, then, is a critique in lesbian and gay scholarship that emerged in humanities and social sciences in the 1970s (Abelove et al., 1993) to make studies about gay, lesbians and bisexual people challenging the binarisms (Gammon and Isgro, 2006). Gender and sexual orientation have been understood in both scholarships as something that is fixed to biological sex, which is given to human beings. Gay and lesbian scholarship follows the norms of a patriarchal system in which heterosexuality is seen as natural, with homosexuality as its direct opposite; this last argument is ground-breaking. In other words, queer theory analyses for the first time the relationship and power relations between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Butler (1990) name it as the 'heterosexual matrix', which is defined as that "grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized […] to characterize hegemonic discursive/epistemic

model of gender intelligibly that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed by stable gender that is appositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality" (p. 151). This normative heterosexuality becomes normative when it is rooted in repudiation, which governs and destabilises the assumption of sex, which proposes a relational heterosexuality that relegates homosexual possibility (Butler, 2004).

Hence, heteronormativity marginalises and pathologises all the other alternatives to exercise sexuality. Even though feminist theory has been carrying out studies of gender inequalities and their power relations in the last years, it is not able to provide a full explanation for the oppression of sexual minorities (Rubin, 1984). However, all these studies have analysed gender and sexuality relations in a relational and binary framework (Fuss, 2013; Butler, 1994). Traditional epistemologies have existed in which thought is constructed in a relational and binary way, which also implies hierarchies and unequal power relations; this way of construct thinking permeates social relations. Therefore, feminism and lesbian and gay studies have been constructed under this way of thinking, generating dichotomies (men-women, homosexuality-heterosexuality, lesbian-gay) and hierarchies, which tend to essentialise categories to analyse them by assuming dichotomies and hierarchies.

As part of the emerging scholarship of queer studies in the area of sociology various scholars started to challenge the lack of studies about sexuality. Some papers argued that although sexuality is a social fact, classical sociologists investigated in all spheres of life except gender and bodies, assuming that they have a natural order (Seidman, 1994). However, sociology plays an important role in the construction of sexuality, given that it is a social matter (Stein and Plummer, 1994). It was not until the 1960s that sexuality arrived in sociological scholarship in United States, from a social constructivist perspective, but maintaining the heterosexual/homosexual and lesbian/gay binary, which is also hierarchical, and considering fixed identities (Seidman, 1994), in the same vein as lesbian and gay

scholarship. Thus, these scholars affirmed that it is fundamental to go beyond lesbian and gay studies in sociology and take into account the proposal of queer studies to transgress conventional categorisation, which is trying to blur the binaries of men/women, thus it could work sometimes as a cover for sexism and male-dominance (Rudy, 2000). This element is one of the main elements that lesbian separatism and queer theory differences from each other, given that as I stated in the previous section, lesbian separatism is looking to construct identities outside of the heteropatriarchal system. In addition, it is necessary to look for different inclusive categories outside of the dichotomy, such as intersectionality (Stein and Plummer, 1994).

Nevertheless, a decade later, Valocchi (2005) produced a criticism of the inclusion of queer theory in sociology. The paper affirmed that despite the promising beginnings of queer sociology in 1990s, now it is merely seen as a legitimate and useful contemporary social theory, which is only "focused on literary texts, and has a lack of attention to the institutional and material context of discursive power and critical deconstruction of identities" (p. 751), as a critique to queer studies, seeing them more related to humanities in their beginnings. However, queer studies have permeated social sciences such as sociology and political sciences.

Queer studies, in contrast to feminist, lesbian and gay studies, propose to analyse sexual identities beyond fixed categories and dichotomies. They are aware of the relational signification and power relations (Smith and Lee, 2014), looking from another perspective at inequalities and oppression, as Rubin (1984) stated. Therefore, it is necessary to look at queer theory, given that it encompasses a more specific and accurate analysis of sexuality issues such as the relegation of lesbians and bisexual women within gender and sexuality hierarchies.

'Queer', as a word, has been used as a discriminatory word for homosexual men in the English language, specifically within the United States (Preciado, 2012). However, from the 1980s, it first

started to be appropriated as an identity concept by people who did not fulfil norms of heteronormativity (Kornak, 2015). This was the beginning of the construction of 'queer' outside of the discriminatory usage, as an umbrella term for members of different sexual minority groups. Hence, 'queer' started to be an identity word that permeated the activism of sexual minorities, becoming a political concept. Unlike 'gay' and 'lesbian' the concept was not binary or fixed to certain specific identities.

Consequently, new discourses of sexuality politics were developed within LGBTQ activism in a powerful critique to the political, social and cultural order regarding the LGBTQ population, after the entrance to activism of queer as a new perspective to understand sexuality, which was more inclusive. This perspective started to encompass new areas within academia, first in cultural studies and humanities and then in social sciences (Gonzalez-Ortuño, 2016).

Thus, queer scholarship has been developed with a basis in Derrida's and Foucault's poststructuralist theory (Namaste, 1994), and in the work of some feminist scholars, such as Butler and Rubin. In the 1990s, queer studies appeared as a new field of sexuality studies (Jagose, 1996; Hall et al., 2013). It emerged as a need to include minorities that lesbian and gay studies do not consider, such as transsexual, bisexual or intersex people, as well as people with aspects in their identity which generate discrimination or differences in the access to opportunities, such as class and ethnicity (intersectionality), challenging the foundations of western homosexual politics (Seidman, 1994). This final characteristic is what I borrow from this theory specifically, the consideration of sexuality outside of the normative standards that lesbian and gay studies have.

The core argument of queer studies is to challenge heteronormativity in society and part of that critique problematises that gay and lesbian studies reproduce the norms of the binary heteronormative system that leave aside sexual identities that have not been identified in any of both extremes (Jagose,

1996), while lesbian and gay studies tend to fix identities, reproducing canons of heteronormativity and homonormativity. These are relationships that are established with assumptions of norms within sexual practices and inside relationships such as marriage and monogamy, among others, provoking marginalisation. Hence, queer studies set a new paradigm in which sexuality and gender are understood as fluid in the construction of bodies. Gender is internalised throughout performativity, that is the reproduction of norms that have been socially constructed through behaviour and discourse (Butler, 1993). Hence, gender is a performed act, and gender norms discipline the roles within couples such as activities, sexual practices, division of work, and making decisions. Consequently, a social rule is generated, which is internalised as part of the social interaction within couples and these are social accepted (heteronormativity). Nevertheless, it is important to understand that gender is not a choice, but "the effect of a regulatory regime of gender differences, in which genders are divided and hierarchized under constraint" (Butler, 1993).

As noted above, Butler (2011) argues that sex, as well as gender, has been discursively constructed: sex not only functions as a norm and a static description; it is a norm, which qualifies a body for life. Butler considers sex in the same line as Foucault, as a regulatory ideal, as regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs as a productive power. Thus, "sex is an ideal construct, which is forcibly materialized through time. It is not a static fact, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize sex" (Butler, 2011, p. 1). It refers to a constraining practice, that is not stable, it is a process through time that embodies sex; in other words, sex and gender are performatives. Thus, Butler (2011) rejects the idea of sex as given prior to construction, and as a passive element of gender/sex dualism compared with other dualisms such as culture/nature, masculine/feminine. In this binary idea of gender/sex, gender is a social construct that is imposed upon the body. Therefore, to theorise and analyse gender as well as sex oppression it is necessary to look beyond sex just as a bodily attribute given and taken for granted.

In the same line of argumentation, Rubin (1984) challenged the way in which studies about sexual minorities were addressed by feminist scholarship, since from this perspective sexuality is considered as a derivation of gender (Butler, 1994). She argued that sexuality has been considered as something frivolous and less important in comparison with poverty, war and disease, among other issues. Nevertheless, it is necessary to bring it in to describe, explain and denounce erotic injustice and sexual oppression, given that this system of oppression cuts across other modes of social inequality. Therefore, it is necessary to consider sexuality as an autonomous domain from which sexuality oppressions have to be analysed.

Rubin (1984) suggested that feminist scholarship analyses sexuality as part of gender and therefore it is necessary to go beyond feminist thinking to analyse the oppression of sexual minorities, by means of a radical theory of sexuality, given that "lesbian feminism has studied the lesbian oppression in terms of the oppression of women. However, lesbians are oppressed as queers and perverts by operation of sexual, not gender stratification" (p. 33). In addition, feminist analysis tends to accept the cultural presumption that sexual intercourse is in accordance with the relations between men and women, which implies that this scholarship recapitulates heterosexist hegemony. Thus, Rubin (1984) considered it necessary to analyse sex separately from gender to construct a theory of sexuality autonomous of feminist theory.

One point that is important to highlight about queer studies is that it has been engaged politically since its beginning, given that it started as a political act to deconstruct the use and meaning of the word 'queer'. Therefore, queer studies have been linked very closely to political action and activism (Kornak, 2015). This implies that queer scholarship is also challenging institutions and dichotomies; bearing this in mind, one of the political statements of queer is that being gay is not enough to be queer (Preciado, 2012), being queer "is being committed to challenging that which is perceived as normal […] the

willingness to seek out sites of resistance to normalcy in any possible location"(Rudy, 2000, p.197), which is a fundamental approach for my project research that pursue to disrupt the normativities that have rooted in the LGBTQ NGOs arena in Mexico. However, it is important to keep the link between theory and political action to ensure that queer studies have an impact on the sexual minorities' community.

In conclusion, queer studies propose to study sexual minorities outside of the fixed identities and dichotomies that cause exclusion to other identities, which helps to grasp the dynamics of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs, merging gender and sexuality invisibilisation for a more integral perspective of analysis. These studies do not replace modern models of gay and lesbian identities; they are trying to stand outside gay and lesbian scholarship to analyse sexuality concerns from another perspective without hierarchising identities and with a political view. One of those identities is non-hegemonic masculinities, which are outside the heteronormative canon; however, their construction is embedded in heteropatriarchal structures and they play an important role in the development of gender dynamics within the LGBTQ movement. Thus, the next subsection addresses them.

Construction of non-hegemonic masculinities

This subsection is dedicated to discussing the construction of masculinities, it is fundamental to focus on this because despite my thesis do not focus specifically in people performing masculinities in particular[6], one of the findings that I address later in the first empirical chapter is that performing masculinities – which are not hegemonic – in the LGBTQ community plays a specific role; showing that non-hegemonic masculinity and manliness is constructed relationally and hierarchically and it is

[6] I highlight "particular", because there are feminine masculinities, so people identified as women or more in the feminine spectrum also perform masculinity, as Halberstam (1998) states in the following page.

embedded in gender norms. I do not focus the discussion on hegemonic masculinity, which is the ideal type of masculinity positioned at the top of the hierarchy of masculinities, and subsequently subordinates all others such as gay men, black men and trans-masculinities (Connell, 1995). Rather, I address subaltern sorts of masculinities that are developed by gay men and specifically trans men.

The way in which masculinities are articulated varies according to the context, because they are a social construction (Halberstam, 1998), a representation. Further, masculinities are plural, and their construction is associated with the importance that gender relations have in socialisation, permeating all spheres of life, such as school, work, media and spaces of everyday life, because as is well known, gender relations are embedded in social organisation, shaping dynamics in society. In this sense, Whittle (2006) explains from personal experience how feminism and trans theory can be linked. Moreover, he agrees that both theoretical positions are not irreconcilable. He also discusses the challenges of building masculinity outside the patriarchal stereotype, which is directly related to gender oppression. He concludes by arguing that boundaries between trans theory and feminism are blurred; therefore it is necessary to think from the margins to challenge assumptions about gender, sex and sexuality, instead of insisting on thinking that trans theory and feminism are separate.

While Whittle (2006) considers trans identities as something entirely socially and politically constructed, Califia (2006) acknowledges the influence of hormone treatments in the construction of masculinity, which he calls manliness. First, I consider it is important to highlight that he uses another category to analyse these changes. It seems that masculinity is something that is constructed and manliness is something more related with the biological aspect, as parallel categories to analyse the identity of trans men. Califia (2006) argues that performing masculinity is a struggle when you have not been socialised with the sex role of a man. In addition, being masculine as a woman is complex and judged as a negative characteristic (female masculinity). Considering these two points, that of the

social aspect and the biological one, Califia concludes that there is a necessity of reshaping how masculinity and manliness are socially constructed and legitimised in trans identities.

Regarding female masculinity, Halberstam (1998) builds a strong and concise study about masculinities that exist between butch/tomboyness and transgender FTM, which argues that the construction of masculinity on bodies assigned female at birth is fluid and is constructed on different levels depending on the identity, but there is a tendency to fold transgender experiences into lesbian butch ones, which helps to understand why trans men are overshadowed by lesbians, being lower in the hierarchy of LGBTQ NGOs. Moreover, an observation that I have made in my project is the understanding of minority masculinities and femininities as destabilisers of the binary gender system on different levels (Halberstam, 1998); therefore butch and trans men performances of masculinities are a resistance to homonormative identities.

In addition, Noble (2013) challenges white masculinity, given that other lines of identification cross the construction of masculinities (Halberstam, 1998). The author makes an intersectional study considering class and race to present a comparison between white privilege and the construction of trans masculinity and its reproduction. He raises the point of how masculinity is performed in different ways in different contexts, reaffirming that it is relational and hierarchised. For instance, in a space where there are only women the status is different (and higher) than in a space of cisgender men (lower); in other words, perception of people and sense of belonging changes. Noble (2013) argues that trans masculinities are developed in this way because they have to articulate their bodies and identities outside of the hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, this work emphasises how the construction of masculinities and their construction are directly related with specific circumstances such as workplaces, which is highly relevant for this work, to analyse how masculinities – not only gay men masculinities – shape gender dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs, given that NGOs are also categorised as

workplaces. The core point of this section was to reflect upon non-hegemonic masculinities and manliness, discussing how their construction is embedded in gender norms, being relational and hierarchical, revealing the effect of masculinities in the construction of hierarchies and organisation of LGBTQ NGOs with respect to spaces, funding and visibilisation.

Having reviewed the above literature, what is notable is that queer theory and its foundations are grounded in the global north; however, it has permeated other regions. The next section addresses the development, challenges, and critiques to queer theory within Latin America, which is the socio-political region that matters to this research.

Queer theory in Latin America

The impact of queer theory has been extensive within social sciences and other disciplines regarding non-normative identities, especially sexual identities. Queer studies have permeated not only different disciplines, but also different regions of the world, despite its foundations in United States of America, which is one of the geopolitical regions that symbolises the hegemonic and normative socioeconomic and historical context (Martínez, 2008) that reproduces unequal dynamics for minority social groups.

Queer theory and queer studies were born in a context of crisis and as contestation to the normative structures about LGBTQ issues in the political arena as well as in the academic field by De Lauretis in 1989 (Halperin, 2003), building a bridge between the political movement and academic field (Valencia, 2015), first in the literary scene and later in social sciences (Gonzalez-Ortuño, 2016), as I reviewed in the previous section. After the boom of queer theory in the United States of America 'queer' was used to refer to different things in different contexts, with the result that it became a buzzword in the political world. As a consequence, De Lauretis retracted the use of this word as the name of a theory that was challenging the normalisation of LGBTQ identities. While it is more

recognised it is becoming less radical (Epps, 2008) and Halperin (2003) says that to be useful it needs to renew its radical power. Spargo (1999) affirms the transgressive power of queer is seeing queer as mobilising, as a verb that unsettles assumptions, given that he uses are generalised and there is also a misunderstanding of the differences between queer as an identity and queer as a political position (Rivas, 2011). Therefore, the way in which it is used randomly only causes a lack of trust from scholars, similar to gender in the area of gender mainstreaming.

It is relevant to highlight this array of statements about the foundations of queer theory because the debate about the use of this body of knowledge in Latin American is based on its foundations, on one side geopolitical and on the other its discursive meaning, related to its school of thought, post-structuralism. There are two different positions about queering Latin America first, there are critiques that say that its foundation in a specific geopolitical territory (United States) does not allow its application in another socio-historical context (Epps, 2008; Mogrovejo, 2011). Second, there are scholars that defend the idea that queer theory could be applied in other contexts, because part of its foundation is from the margins, considering different identities that have been marginalised (Falconí, 2014; Valencia, 2015). There are different arguments for both sides; I will summarise both sides to argue how queer theory informs this research that is geopolitically based in Latin America and in particular in Mexico.

Could Latin America be queer?

The impossibility of translating the word into Spanish (the official language of the majority of the region) is one of the main critiques against it, arguing that the most obvious reason for rejecting its use is that the social meaning is not understood – related to an insult that existed before the creation of queer as a political movement, while in Spanish it does not have a definition and meaning; actually,

in Spanish, 'queer' instead of being stray is intellectual (Epps, 2008). Moreover, Rivas (2011) adds that the attempt to translate the word would simplify the frame of reference, taking out all the radicalism which characterises queer theory. However, the issue of translation is only the major rejection and most commonly about a deeper critique that argues that language has different significations in different contexts and the importance of historicising those words and theoretical projects.

I would like to examine in more depth the issue of historical meaning. Queer does not have the political weight in Spanish that the historical meaning has in English; hence it is not possible to signify something that does not have a signification (Epps, 2008). Rivas (2011) affirms that the historicisation and the socio-political context exist only in English. Consequently, the position of Gargallo (2009) is supported regarding the rejection of queer theory in Latin America. From this perspective, the construction of the socio-historical context and geopolitical territory in which the queer movement emerged is specific and it cannot be transferred to other contexts. In this sense, Mogrovejo (2012) says it is problematic to attempt the replication of westernised concepts from the USA to be applied in Latin America. From this critique originates the interest in translating the word to be able to create own projects from the south to the south, since imported models do not fit with reality completely (Martínez, 2008) and there is no connection between scholars from the north and the south (Rivas, 2011).

As a consequence of the critiques to the word 'queer' with its roots in Anglo-Saxon language and its usage, in Latin America and Spain there have been attempts to use 'sexual diversity' ('Diversidad sexual') as a translation, trying to create a new branch of queer theory for the specific region. However, this has not had the same traction as queer theory (Epps, 2008). In addition, there is a theoretical development in Latin America that challenges gender and sexualities (Viteri, Serrano and Vidal-Ortiz, 2011). For instance, Martinez (2008) states that the theoretical developments of Gloria Anzaldua and

Cherrie Mogara are about marginalised identities, helping to develop a body of knowledge in the same line. However, even though there are feminists in Latin America working with marginalised subjects, the essence or the main objective of queer theory is not the same and it might fit better in some ways with LGBTQ identities than feminism.

Mogrovejo (2008) made a strong critique of 'sexual diversity' as (failed) project. First, she includes normative sexualities such as heterosexuality, which is privileged within the heteropatriarchal system. In addition, she says that it reproduces the issue of queer theory, becoming an umbrella term causing the blurring of other identities, such as lesbians, who have been more marginalised in comparison to gay men. This critique is also taken from political lesbian theory. Scholars as Jeffreys (1999) refuse queer theory because it erases fixed identities, specifically women, as an essentialised identity. Butler (2011) rejects this critique because queer theory does not give up all the identities that provide cultural validity.

The majority of these critiques are embedded in the hierarchisation of the global north over the south, provoking a clear suspicion and mistrust because queer theory comes from the United States of America. Nonetheless, part of queer theory's aim or purpose is the deconstruction of binary systems; consequently, its creation in the north is insufficient argument to avoid its application in the south, albeit with reservations and being critical, because it is useful for Latin American contexts to challenge identities, not only sex/gender but also ethnicity, class and race from a perspective that challenges the hegemonic ideas of identities. In the next section I will develop the reasons I rely on to apply queer theory in my research, which is based in Mexico, part of Latin America, using different case studies, as well as theory developed on this matter.

Re-thinking queer/cuir in Latin America

Latin America in itself is a very complex territory regarding the construction of identity (Falconi, 2014). Historically, it has had difficulties in building politics of identities; however, it is important to bear in mind that cultural differences and intersectional identities are a cornerstone in the understanding of social dynamics within this territory, including sexual identities. In addition, the history of Latin America and, in general, the global south as colonised regions has been disciplined and regulated by Western countries as queer regions (Kapoor, 2015). As I mentioned previously, importing queer theory from the United States to explain another context does not work. Instead it is necessary to reimagine queer because the realities that it is trying to explain do not correspond to the subjects defined (Arboleda Ríos, 2011). However, there are no bodies of knowledge that are applied directly; there is a work of introspection, context and reflection; as Latour (2005) says, it is necessary to think on the heterogeneity of the context. Moreover, Martinez (2008) proposes to think in a rhizomatic way, developing as a chain of concepts, knowledge and matters of specific context, and allowing the elaboration of a new body of knowledge because there is no unique body of queer theory. In other words, it is adaptable to the cultural-historical context, taking this as a starting point of the construction of a dialogue between Latin America and queer theory as two complex concepts that are changing and are adaptable to the specific background. Therefore, it is important not to take for granted the understanding of queer and its application in different contexts (Falconi, Castellanos and Viteri, 2014), as well as to think of it as an unfinished process, in which misunderstandings and accidents are part of the process (Falconi, 2014). It requires a cultural translation, considering that sexualities are not fixed and in a dialogue within the contexts from which they are produced and reproduced (Viteri, 2008). Sedgwick (1995) argues that the terrain of gender, sexuality and race is not entirely isotopic or smooth, but intricately textured, suggesting a non-continuous space, in which sex and race are steadily articulated and disarticulated (Aydemir, 2011). Hence, the way in which queer

theory is developed in Latin America on the one hand borrows some elements of its foundations and on the other re-thinks and creates alternatives that are more suitable to the geopolitical and socio-historical context, taking into account the syncretism of practices of post-colonial regions.

Queer theory – also in Latin America – is underpinned by the idea of vindicating a model of intersectional politics that rejects ideas of monolithic and dichotomous identities, representing the precarious and putting together all the marginalised identities, not only sexual (Valencia, 2015). Thus, intersectionality plays a role, bringing into consideration gender, race and ethnicity, which is one of the most relevant features of queer theory in comparison to other bodies of knowledge that overlook race and ethnicity while analysing sexuality and gender, such as lesbian separatism (Rudy, 2001; Nast, 2002). Drawn from that premise, the aim of queer theory in Latin America is not related to the oppressive processes of the north; instead, queer theory creates knowledge for this specific context (Viteri, Serrano and Vidal-Ortiz, 2011) because theories and terms are being translated and interpreted in the specific contexts. Regarding gender, Butler (2019) explains that translation is not only from one language to another, but also refers to interpretation in different contexts, trespassing the border (territorial and symbolic) from its foundations; thus it weaves webs of interchange and dialogue possible with the south, understanding the south as a critical position not only as territory (Valencia, 2015), provoking a flux of knowledge from north to south and vice versa (Rivas, 2011). For example, a number of different scholars have been working with queer theory and applying it to a non-western context, successfully generating different perspectives and paths to work with queer theory, and borrowing knowledge and applying it to the north and the south indiscriminately. Garcia (2009) shows the relevance of ethnicity within sexuality, and how it shapes heteronormative practices. She uses a case study of teenagers in the United States identified as Latinas, concluding that race hinges with sexuality and this junction causes a different kind of oppressions and risks. In addition, Kapoor (2015), discusses the relationship between queer and the Third World and how both have been marginalised

by Western society, affirming that the Third World has been queered by their non-normative practices, as well as because it has been regulated and disciplined by western as queer. Finally, Ghosh (2015) made a study about queer NGOs in India, arguing that is possible to achieve objectives as an NGO and still be queer; thus the study challenges on one side the non-application of queer theory for politics and, on the other, the use of queer theory in non-Western contexts. Therefore, queer theory could be fruitfully applied to non-Western contexts, analysing NGOs, which is relevant as these are the institutions that this research analyses.

Consequently, one of the contributions of queer theory in Latin America is that it can challenge the hierarchisation of knowledge and geopolitics. Thus, queer theory in Latin America is an act of resistance not only regarding sexuality, but also regarding the production of knowledge. Hence, fluidity is not only within identities; it is also about the production of knowledge in a non-hierarchised way, breaking the binaries not only in gender and sexuality but also in geopolitical understanding. Thus, queer theory in Latin America is written in the north but could be re-read in the south, helping to generate bridges between bodies of knowledge.

Although queer theory – in Latin America, as in other regions – works as an umbrella term that tries to include all identities, it has failed to some extent overlooked bisexuality. Thus, the next section refers to studies on bisexuality that have been carried out on the margins of queer and lesbian and gay studies.

Bisexuality

In comparison to research on lesbian, gay and transgender identities, studies about bisexuality are sparse within sexuality studies (Yoshino, 2000; Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell, 2009; Angelides, 2006; Gammon and Isgro, 2006; Barker et. al., 2012). This could be ascribed to its later entrance into the

gay and lesbian movement or to the lack of a bisexual label in medical discourse (Callis, 2009), as well as to its overlapping with homosexuality (Yoshino, 2000). However, the invisibility of bisexuality seems to be related to structural conditions and systems of oppression of sexual dissidence (heteronormativity and homonormativity), given that figures indicate that there are more bisexuals than homosexuals (Yoshino, 2000). Therefore, bisexuality studies and bisexuality as an identity are recognised only to an extent, resulting in the erasure of bisexual people. Among bisexual women this erasure occurs to a major extent because of factors related to gender. Consequently, a discussion of bisexuality historicisation and its theoretical developments is absolutely essential for this research, because bisexual erasure has much to do with the invisibilisation of bisexual women within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. The heteropatriarchal norms embedded in society privileges heterosexual people, while homosexual people have been oppressed and discriminated due to not fulfilling the norms of heteronormativity. Thus, heterosexuality and homosexuality as categories work in a binary system, each defining itself against the other in a relational way, in which heterosexuality's meaning has a relationship with homosexuality as its opposite category and vice versa. However, as a binary system, there is no space for a third category: bisexuality. Historically, the respective founders of psychoanalysis and evolutionary theory, Sigmund Freud and Charles Darwin, both studied bisexuality but found it complicated their theories on sexuality and reproductive drives (Callis, 2009). Bisexuality often has been thought of as something in the middle of two ends, as a category to explain ambivalent aspects of humans as Macdowall (2009) explains: first, 'bisexual' was used to define physiological characteristics of humans (intersexuality). Second, historically, it was used to define gender expression: people could be read as men or women (Armstrong, 1995; Garber, 1995; Storr, 2013). Finally, bisexuality in more contemporaneous history is understood as a sexual orientation, which is the meaning recognised nowadays.

Nevertheless, independent of the meaning, bisexuality has been very often marginalised. There are different levels and stages of erasure of bisexuality, but all of them are interwoven to carry on its invisibilisation, as an implicit social contract (Yoshino, 2000). First, bisexuality has been denied by medical discourse, with the consequence that its own political movement was built slower and later than lesbian and gay movements (Callis, 2009). In the more recent history of sexuality there have been different attempts to visibilise and to grasp the complexities of bisexuality within sexuality scholarship, which is relevant because it helps to understand the specific role of bisexual people within the LGBTQ movement.

There are two main scholars discussing historisation of bisexuality, challenging its invisibilisation by restoring its history as a way of vindication, and being the most relevant in bisexuality scholarship. First, Yoshino (2000) develops the theory of the erasure of bisexuality as an epistemic contract in society, which states that bisexuality has been erased because of the denial of non-fixed identities, as part of the reinforcement of heterosexism. In addition, he considers monogamy as a further hindrance to visibilising bisexuality, due to the impossibility for bisexual people to have two partners (of different genders) at the same time to be recognised as bisexuals instead of hetero/homosexuals. Bringing monogamy into the discussion, Yoshino (2000) untangles another level of invisibilisation, because it is not only monogamy but also monosexuality which posits that desire is only orientated to one gender (Gammon and Isgro, 2006). Therefore, bisexuality threatens monosexual identities, which are in a better-ranked position within the hierarchy of sexual practices proposed by Rubin (1984). Hence, Yoshino's analysis (2000) allows a further understanding that the sexual practices exercised by people within heteropatriarchy do not only depend on sexual orientation. They include specific norms, called heteronormativity and homonormativity, which refer to gay and lesbian people who reproduce the moral norms and symbolic order of heteronormativity (Moreno and Pichardo, 2006) as more legitimised sexual and romantic practices. For instance, monogamy is better ranked than promiscuous

sex, or not having stable partners. In consequence, within this normativity of sexual orientation, bisexuality is placed in the lowest position. Here it is relevant to add that these moral norms vary according to gender; therefore bisexual men and bisexual women have different places in the hierarchy (Carrier, 1985; Mohr and Rochlen, 1999; Eliason, 2000: Israel and Mohr, 2004); however, the gender factor within bisexuality will be addressed later in this section. Thus, to visibilise bisexuality, it is necessary first to eliminate the stigma and find a way to generate the pride about it that other identities of sexual dissidence have been developing.

In addition, in the same line of argument as Yoshino (2000), Angelides (2006) states that bisexuality has been erased from society because of its unfixed nature, clashing with the essence and understanding of identity that is grounded in stable and fixed categories of understanding. This scholar develops a theory from poststructuralism, which proposes that bisexuality, heterosexuality, and homosexuality all exist together in the same system of significance, a triad instead of a binary, and bisexuality is defined by its two poles. Angelides (2006) states that the level of dependence of bisexuality on being defined from heterosexuality and homosexuality is the same level of dependence of homo/heterosexuality on being defined by bisexuality. I disagree, because although it is undeniable that those three categories are relational to each other, placing them on the same level of interdependence could result in the erasing of the historical invisibilisation of bisexuality as an inferior category.

Straight passing is another factor that has marginalised bisexual people within heteronormative and monosexual societies. It refers to the possibility that bisexual people have avoided discrimination because of their sexual orientation – which is non-heterosexual –, specifically when they are in sex-affective relationships with people of the opposite gender. However, straight passing, which implies specific privileges, does not remove the other ways of invisibilisation and marginalisation that bisexual

people experience, being a false privilege or temporary and illusory (Hummings, 1997). I consider that straight passing is a consequence of the system that privileges and takes for granted heterosexuality, in other words, compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980) and the straight mind (Wittig, 1992). Because there is a general assumption that people who are related sex-emotionally to people of the opposite sex (i.e. women related to men, and men to women) are heterosexual, there is no doubt or question about their sexual orientation, closing off the possibility of thinking of them as bisexuals, queer or any other possibility outside of heterosexuality. Many groups that belong to the lesbian and gay movement reproduce this invisibilisation, such as the scholar Sheila Jeffreys (1999), who belongs to the radical feminism and lesbian political feminism scholarship. The main argument of those branches is that being bisexual and deciding to have relationships with men, serves heteropatriarchal norms because it implies the oppression of women, given that they are serving men or existing in relation to them – for example, being seen as objects of desire (Lorde, 2007) – which reproduces unequal power dynamics. This negative understanding of bisexuality comes from their main political posture of being lesbian as a decision, rather than just a sexual orientation in which they exist outside male domination, hence bisexuals – specifically women – are deciding to reproduce male supremacy, heteronormativity (Armstrong, 1995), and passing (using straight passing), which from those perspectives supports the heteropatriarchal system.

In addition, as mentioned before, bisexuality also has embedded gender relations, and therefore gender relations as category of analysis are relevant in bisexuality. It helps to grasp and differentiate experiences of bisexual men and women, and in addition, gender analysis facilitates understanding the place that they have in the hierarchy of sexual minorities within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. It means that in Mexico bisexuality is in the process of being recognised as a valid identity, but in addition to this, bisexual women are less visible and considered in comparison to bisexual men, having more access to public spaces and being more heard, as I explain in detail in chapter 4. Therefore, – in the

same way as in other spaces of the LGBTQ community – gender norms permeate bisexuality, with the result that the experiences of bisexual women and bisexual men are different in distinct layers, as mentioned before.

First, the way in which bisexuality has been addressed regarding men: Jeffreys (1999) affirms that the bisexual movement has been dominated by bisexual men, leaving bisexual women invisible, as in other spaces of identity. However, different studies affirm that bisexuality in men is less visible in comparison to bisexuality in women; Carrier (1985) affirms that men who have sex with men are understood as homosexual, even if they engage in sexual intercourse with both men and women. Contrary to this argument, Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell (2009) argue that bisexuality is not recognised as an identity for men; rather, they prefer to be considered as heterosexual men that have sex with men, because of their masculinity and manhood (Armstrong, 1995), in other words, outside of LGBTQ sphere bisexual men are seen as gay, and they try to recognise themselves as heterosexuals that have sex with men, to avoid discrimination. Regardless the box of homo/hetero in which they are placed, Eliason (2000) argues that bisexuality in men is a less recognised identity in comparison to lesbians, gay men and bisexual women. Second, the sexual freedom that is socially acceptable for men helps to reduce the impact of one of the stigmas of bisexuality, which is promiscuity and lack of stability in partners. Finally, the cost to men of having sex with men and women is more related to rejection within heterosexual spaces because they are labelled as gay men and therefore their discrimination is more linked to homophobia (Eliason, 2000), while gay men tend not to have equivalent issues with bisexual men and their relationships with women (Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell, 2009).

In the case of stigma for bisexual women, discrimination and invisibilisation come from other places and are built on different foundations. First, bisexual women tend to be sexualised and considered an

object of male desire (Amstrong, 1995; Eliason, 2000). They are discriminated against on one side because they are not heterosexual and on the other because they are not lesbians (Bower, 2013). Women are rejected from some lesbian spaces where they do not approve of women having relationships with men, due to heteropatriarchy (Udis – Kesller, 2013; Jeffreys, 1999; Harman, 2006), as mentioned previously. Second, moral norms and sexual freedom for women are placed in a different ranking in comparison to men. Femininity has to fulfil moral norms, such as monogamy, sex only for reproductive reasons and stable partners. Thus, bisexuality with all the negative assumptions about sexual freedom (Israel and Mohr, 2004) is highly stigmatised among women, and not only by heterosexual people but also in lesbian communities.

All these different approaches, understanding and categorisations on different levels about bisexuality in relation to gender, show two situations that are important to highlight. First, the way in which the invisibilisation and/or discrimination of bisexual men and women is shaped by phallocentricity, understood as a social system that defines and structures relationships of domination, in which the phallus is a symbol of human status (Thompson, 1991; Lacan in Butler, 2011; Mackinnon, 1982). Thus, the sexual orientation of both bisexual men and women is assumed in terms of their sexual activity with men. Therefore, bisexual men having sex with men are considered 'more' gay and bisexual women having sex with men are 'more' straight. This assumption permeates the position that bisexual people are positioned on the hierarchy of identities inside of LGBTQ spaces, as well as outside it, showing different results: on one hand, bisexual men are less recognised inside of LGBTQ spaces, and are less stigmatised for having sex with men and women, while bisexual women are more recognised but more discriminated against within LGBTQ spaces by lesbians (Armstrong, 1995; Udis-Kesller, 2013; Israel and Mohr, 2004; Ault, 2016). On the other hand, outside of the LGBTQ community bisexual men tend to be more stigmatised because of homophobia by heterosexual men (Eliason, 2000), while bisexual women are less stigmatised because sex between women is not

considered sex, as real sex implies a phallus (Armstrong, 1995). Therefore, gender relations are embedded in bisexuality and organise the hierarchy of prohibited and allowed sexual practices, as well as identities that are more valid depending on the gender of the subjects.

Consequently, the legitimisation of bisexuality has been complex and challenging in academic scholarship just as much as in political struggle (Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell, 2009). Thus, this sexual identity has been largely invalidated, because it is associated with confusion, immaturity and a transitional stage. However, it is necessary to comprehend bisexuality as a sexual identity that has been neglected and stigmatised historically and it is necessary to vindicate it within political movements, as well as in the academic field.

Although sexuality studies within social sciences are dedicated to analysing, explaining, and visibilising sexual minorities, its attempts to analyse bisexuality and legitimise it had limited success in the different stages of its development as a discipline. As I developed in the section on feminism, sexuality studies have also had different paradigms to explain sexuality –, essentialist, constructivist and poststructuralist – in which identities are constructed in different ways and from this, the explanation of the issues and experiences varies. Nevertheless, in all three, bisexuality has been invisibilised to an extent (Gammon and Isgro, 2006), as I will address below.

The essentialist paradigm is the one which rejects bisexuality the most, given that it addresses identities as something fixed, therefore leaving no place for bisexuality. In other words, gay/lesbian identity has been constructed as a fixed/static/stable identity – in the same way as gender identities are constructed under this immovable system of identities – while bisexuality is considered simply as a transition point to define identity, resulting in a lack of legitimation as a valid identity (Lingel, 2009). As consequence, bisexuality is excluded from lesbian and gay spaces (Udis-Kesller, 1995). Therefore, bisexual people have to choose to identify themselves as heterosexual or gay/lesbian (Lingel, 2009).

The second paradigm in sexuality studies takes an approach towards politicising bisexuality. In other words, here bisexuality starts to be defined to some extent, but more as a political identity (Gammon and Isgro, 2006), because bisexuality needs a stable gender system to make sense as it is about attraction to men and women as stable categories. Although bisexuality was not conceptualised as a category (Angelides, 2006), at least some acknowledgement of it was made. This progress implied separating biology and nature from the understanding of sexualities, but this understanding was still embedded in dual dynamics and in binary systems of significance in which it is difficult to categorise something that belongs to the middle of the dichotomous categories of gender, which at the same time correspond to the foundations of the idea of bisexuality, the attraction to both genders, considering just two (bi), as Barker, et. al. (2012) affirm.

The third paradigm is poststructuralism, which is the foundation of queer theory. Despite the understanding of bisexuality as a category of identity which is unstable/not fixed (Angelides, 2001; Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell, 2009; Gammon and Isgro, 2006) and fluid (Lingel 2009), it has been also erased from queer studies as a category that could be analysed and studied. Some of the main queer theorists such as Judith Butler and Foucault do not address bisexuality (Callis, 2009) or in other cases, scholars reject it as an identity, as Eve K. Sedgwick did (Angelides, 2001). Garber (1995), as a pioneer of bisexuality studies within queer studies to visibilise this category, affirmed that the nature of bisexuality is queer and outside of the binaries. Therefore, this would take for granted that sexuality studies would consider bisexuality as part of the scholarship; however, they did not encompass it. Todd-Weiss (2004) affirms that in the same way as transsexual studies, bisexuality is too queer for queer scholarship, while Callis (2009) states that bisexuality is not sophisticated enough for queer theory and makes a theoretical analysis on how Foucault's theory of sexuality and Butler's gender theory could analyse bisexuality within their theories, although they do not address it. Consequently,

despite the attempts to explain sexual minorities from different theories, bisexuality has often been left aside, invisibilised by gay and lesbian studies, as well as queer theory.

The foundations of bisexuality are embedded in heteropatriarchal dynamics because bisexuality defines by itself the existence of only two genders. Hence, bisexuality as an identity reproduces systems of oppression related to binary systems; however, neglecting or invisibilising its existence does not solve the issue. It is necessary to understand that bisexual people, as well as bisexuality as a political identity, exist and be aware of them as we are of gays, lesbians, and transgender people, and to analyse bisexuality and build more inclusive identities around sexual orientation. Bisexuality, as all other sexual identities, is related to the others and hierarchised because of its existence within the structure of heteropatriarchy, as previously mentioned. The next section is dedicated to unravelling, explaining and discussing how heteropatriarchy shapes social dynamics and organisation by means of other devices of social control, such as heteronormativity in wider society and homonormativity in the LGBTQ sphere.

Heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity and homonormativity

After reviewing feminist theory, lesbian political feminism, and queer theory I consider it relevant to pause and check the relationship, meaning, and importance of heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity and homonormativity, which are concepts central to those three theories (figure 1). The main aim is grasping the way in which these concepts are going to be applied for the specific contexts of LGBTQ NGOs and the gender dynamics of those spaces.

Before addressing the first concept: heteropatriarchy, it is important to highlight that phallocentrism plays a role in this research, this system of oppression is broader to heteropatriarchy, and as I mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, phallocentrism organises society hierarchically, in

which the possession of a phallus symbolises human status(Thompson, 1991; Lacan in Butler, 2011; Mackinnon, 1982), and this (unequal) social organisation permeates from heteropatriarchy to homonormativity.

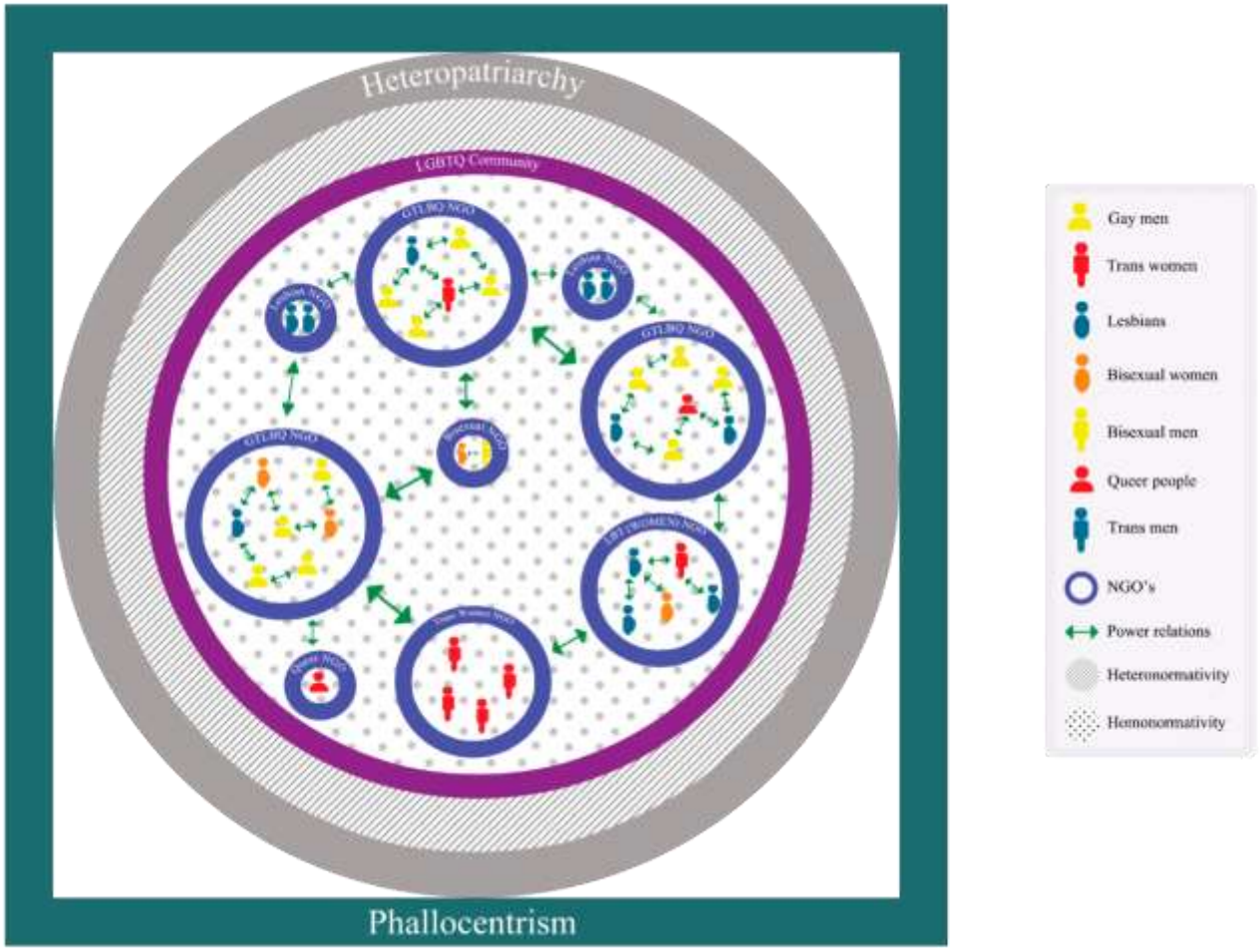


Figure 1

As aforementioned, heteropatriarchy is a key concept in this thesis as it helps build an understanding of how gender, organised in relation to normative sexuality, shapes the LGBTQ arena. Heteropatriarchy is built on the concept of patriarchy – that has been used by radical feminist scholars to define the system of oppression related to gender – but adds the element of sexuality - drawing on lesbian political feminism - which affirms that heterosexuality is also constructed under patriarchal

norms and dynamics. Therefore, heteropatriarchal societies have two levels of oppression: first, gender and second, sexuality.

However, heterosexuality as a sexual orientation is not the system of oppression; the system of oppression goes deeper in the organisation of society: heteronormativity. Halberstam (2005) and Warner (1991) explain that heterosexuality and heteronormativity cannot be understood as synonymous and to understand the second it is necessary to grasp the ways that heterosexual bodies, subjects, norms and practices are articulated and naturalised in relation to the non-normative ones. Thus, heterosexuality needs to fulfil certain norms to be privileged by society, playing a role of oppression to the bodies that do not achieve those norms. For example, being married and having a stable family are the two main institutions embedded in heteronormativity (Cohen, 1997; Nast, 2002; Moreno and Pichardo, 2006). Therefore, heteronormativity is defined as the "practices and institutions, which legitimise and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and natural within society" (Cohen, 1997, p. 440).

Even though heteronormativity has been used to explain non-heterosexual relationships and their practices, there is a concept which works as a mirror of heteronormativity: homonormativity. It refers to these normative practices but in the LGBTQ realm, thus it is built over the ruins of heteronormativity (Moreno and Pichardo, 2006). Homonormativity has been understood in different ways and used in different contexts – for example, for geographers of sexuality homonormativity is related only to neoliberal practices that do not contest dominant heteronormativity (Duggan, 2002; Stryker, 2008; Brown, 2012), and also linked to the appropriation of spaces to try to fit the norm of heterosexuals; it is especially performed by white, gay, middle class men who have the privileges to reproduce those practices (Duggan, 2012; Moreno and Pichardo, 2006; Brown, 2009). Nevertheless, it seems to be very reductionist to think of homonormativity only on an economic/class level. Other

scholars that consider homonormativity on a deeper social level, such as Moreno and Pichardo (2006), Stryker (2008) and Vitulli (2010); understand homonormativity as an imitation of heteronormative gender, sexual, race, ethnicity and class that reinforces hegemonic identities on all these levels. In the words of Moreno and Pichardo (2006) homonormativity is:

> "the cultural construction that becomes homosexuality in a normative space of sexual dissidence that assumes gender as an element which generates relationships, practices, sexual identities, and it is complementary to heteronormativity even if it is questioning it" (p. 151)[7]

Thus, homonormativity implies shaping practices that are trying to imitate heteronormativity (Jones, 2009), but these are not restricted to the economic arena, they cut across race and gender, as well as class, which "presuppose and reinforce paradigmatically a male position" (Warner, 1991, p. 14). Consequently, while all society is shaped by heteronormativity built on heteropatriarchal structures and practices, non-heterosexual spaces, such as the LGBTQ movement and LGBTQ NGOs, are shaped and influenced by homonormative practices that are a mirror of the heteronormative ones, as shown in figure 1. In addition, it shows that the representation of homonormative practices does not transgress the status quo, but rather they extend the norm to belong to it (Oswin, 2008). This understanding of homonormativity implies a pure copy and representation of the heteronormative practices in terms of Butler's performativity: forced reiteration of forced, oppressive norms (Butler, 2011).

However, in the same line as Butler's performativity theory it is possible to grasp the appropriation and agency of these practices outside of the normative spaces. In Butler's (1990) words, "it is only within the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible" (p. 185). Taking this as a theoretical basis, it is possible to say that the reproduction, reiteration and copy of

[7] My own translation

homonormative practices is what opens the possibility of re-shaping them to transgress the norms, but taking into account that this agency is not individual voluntarism (Butler, 2011). Therefore, it is possible to build transgressive spaces outside of homonormativity, through the performance of normative practices (Bell, Binnie, Cream and Valentine, 1994). Jones (2009) affirms that all the identities/bodies that do not fit in homonormativity are beyond mimesis and are looking to create spaces 'to celebrate their queerness', creating dynamics as well as spaces that are to some extent transgressive to normative LGBTQ, which she calls 'queer heterotopias', referring to all the queer spaces that are beyond homonormative practices.

Having set up both perspectives: homonormativity – understood as a straightforward copy of heteronormative practices – and queer heterotopias – the ability of queer spaces to be constructed entirely outside of homonormative practices, it is possible to build a working definition of homonormativity that plays and communicates with the needs of this research, arguing that homonormativity is the set of practices performed within the LGBTQ realm that reinforces, mirrors and copies heteronormative ones, transgressing these dynamics to some extent, regarding different aspects embodied in identity which organise social relations, such as race, class and gender, hierarchically. For instance, middle class gay men are closer to homonormative practices than working class lesbians and bisexual women are. The next section will address how spaces on their different levels have a direct relationship with the (in)visibilisation of different sexual identities informed by queer theory, regarding the context and power relations embedded in spaces.

Queer spaces

This section aims to analyse and interrogate the relevance of space as a significant category in shaping gender and sexuality dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs. Spaces within the discipline of social geography have been understood as socially constructed: they play a role in the reproduction of social categories

(Valentine, 2002), with which identity has a direct relationship. As Bell, Binnie, Cream and Valentine (1994) affirm, "The language of social relations and identity are inherently spatial" (p. 31). Thus, social relations are linked to spaces, and at the same time are gendered and sexualised (Ingram, 1993; Knopp, 1995). Therefore, it is important to examine first some different definitions of space that will be employed in this work, so as to discuss the specific relevance of queer spaces and how they are constituted as heterosexualised spaces, as well as how they influence the gendered dynamics of LGBTQ NGOs. On one hand, Ingram (1997) defines spaces not only as geographical space, but also observes:

> "Habitation and arena for power can be described through words also by ways of maps, sketches, photographs and plans; it can be considered on metaphorical, physical, and theoretical levels" (p. 8)

This first definition provides a general idea that spaces are not only physical, they are also abstract, implying meanings and significations that are neither physical nor fixed. On the other hand, Hemmings' (1997) development of bisexual spaces provides a more elaborated and useful definition that helps to understand the different concepts of space. It defines spaces in three different ways: first, as geographical concrete spaces (i.e. bars, offices, or individual living spaces); second, as spaces of articulation, which means "the scope and range of meaning that concrete spaces have outside their specific geographical confines, as well as the effect that those meanings have on other spaces" (Hemmings, 1997, p. 153). These spaces exist more in the collective understanding of people – the example that Hemmings (1997) uses is gay and lesbian culture – spaces of articulation have been created and understood within concrete spaces but go beyond, and can be modified, reproduced and produced in other concrete spaces that may or may not be related to lesbian and gay culture. The third kind of spaces are called performative spaces, defined as "temporary spaces where relationships occur by members of the same and different communities, often spontaneously". These spaces also could

be new, in which new relationships could be performed, considered as "experiential spaces"; and this performativity has an effect on the meaning of larger sexual spaces (Hemmings, 1997). Even though LGBTQ NGOs represent a specific kind of space (physical/concrete), the construction of spaces for lesbians and bisexual women within LGBTQ NGOs is also related to spaces of articulation in which the spaces, norms and dynamics are produced, reproduced and challenge existing ones.

Another label of the spaces concerned in this research is their queerness. As I have discussed throughout this chapter, there is a difference between gay and lesbian and queer studies. This case is no exception: in this section I argue about queer spaces, considering them as spaces that are beyond lesbian/gay spaces; therefore, queer spaces are questioning beyond the white middle class male homosexuality. In other words, queer spaces challenge homonormativity (Browne, 2006).

However, I would like to discuss how spaces are "heterosexualised". Sexuality, as is well known and as mentioned above, has been considered as something that belongs to the private sphere. However, the construction of identities around sexuality regarding sexual orientation and sexual identity permeates different areas of everyday life, actually all of them. Therefore, the construction of spaces is heterosexualised, in other words, public spaces such as cities, malls, streets are designed and produced (ambiently) as heterosexual, heterosexist and heteronormative (Bell and Valentine, 1995).

Heterosexualistion is done throughout performativity, taking Butler's (2011) concept of performativity as a conceptual tool to examine the production of sexualised spaces. These, in a similar way to bodies, can be performed and can be a performative articulation of power to create representations (Bell, Binnie, Cream and Valentine, 1994; Valentine, 2002). Thus, this repetition of acts – or example, opposite-sex kissing or holding hands, and also the heterosexuality implicit in advertising images– causes the heterosexualisation of spaces, (Valentine, 1996), provoking the invisibility of all the non-normative sexualities, on different levels and in different ways. Hence it is important to consider

intersectionality to analyse sexualised spaces (Knopp, 1995), with elements such as gender, class, or race.

In the same line of argument as has been developed throughout this chapter, spaces are not only heterosexualised, they are also gendered (Valentine, 1993; Alder and Benner, 1992; Ingram, 1993; Bell, Binnie, Cream and Valentine, 1994; Knopp, 1995; Valentine, 2002; Doan, 2010). This is key for the argument of the construction of spaces of lesbians and bisexual women because gay men and lesbian/bisexual women perform differently within those sexualised spaces. On one side, gay men were the first group to create gay ghettos, but they caused gentrification and displaced other vulnerable groups such as working-class people and immigrants from those neighbourhoods (Valentine, 2002), thus the "gay village" spaces are cosmopolitan and chic spaces related to consumption and production (Knopp, 1995), as well as consumerism. Therefore, gay men, by and large, control the non-heterosexualised spaces, as Anzaldua (1990) affirms: "the majority of people who run visibly queer ghettos and municipalities are middle-class gay men" (p. XVII)). It is important to highlight that this situation is related to global dynamics, as Marchard and Runyan (2010) state "[neoliberal globalization] has also been linked with the production of the universal (read Western) gay (read wealthy, white male) consumer, particularly of the sexual services of men and boys in the Global South" (p.15). On the other side, lesbian and bisexual women occupy spaces in different ways: first, given the economic inequalities of gender, they tend to live in working-class neighbourhoods (Alder and Brenner, 1992), because they have less access to capital, being economically disadvantaged (Bell, 1991; Bell and Valentine, 1995). In addition, other gender disadvantages, such as gender violence, has kept women outside the public landscape, in lesbian spaces (Valentine, 2002). Nevertheless, the performance of lesbians – as female workers – transgresses and transforms the public articulation of sexualities and gender performances (Valentine 1996), demonstrating that there are some performances that only work within the heterosexual matrix (Bell and Valentine, 1995). Consequently, lesbians and bisexual

women occupying spaces that are hostile for them due to heteropatriarchal norms is a transgression by itself, despite the fact that they have been historically relegated to private spaces.

This brings in another element of the construction of gendered/heterosexualised spaces, that is, the false binary of public and private space. Spaces, like many other social categories in language, have been constructed in binary systems, as Foucault (1986) states, sacred/profane, protected/open, urban/rural and public/private, creating a hierarchy ensemble of spaces. This division of public and private spaces has shaped social dynamics (Ingram, 1993) related to gender and sexuality, benefiting groups that are under heteropatriarchal norms. In other words, the binary of public/private in spaces fits perfectly with the gender feminine/masculine and sexuality heterosexual/homosexual[8] binary system, in which public is associated with masculine and heterosexual and private with feminine and homosexuality. Consequently,

> "The real usage of public-private dichotomy is employed to construct, control, discipline, confine and exclude gender and sexual difference, preserving traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures. (Spivak, 1988, p. 103)

Thus, acts/bodies/representations are not related to public/private spaces; instead, this division is related to the set of norms, the power relations exercised to reflect and reproduce male dominance, known as heteropatriarchy (Valentine, 1993). Therefore, the way in which spaces are constructed under heteropatriarchal norms shows that bodies that do not fulfil and at the same time transgress heteropatriarchal norms are marginalised and invisibilised; therefore, they are socially disadvantaged.

[8] The binary system is constructed with homosexuality; however, in this specific case, I understand that side of the binary as non-heterosexual to consider not only people attracted to the same sex but rather bisexuals, queers, pansexual and all the alternatives of sexual orientations.

The workplace as a queer space

One example of concrete spaces that are relevant for this research are workplaces, given that NGOs overlap with the work sector. Therefore, this subsection is intended to discuss the organisation of gender within workplaces, specifically non-hegemonic masculinities, grasping the differences and the ways in which these identities shape the dynamics in these specific spaces.

It is well known that gender shapes all aspects of everyday life. However, there is not always a consideration of the social relations in different spheres such as the workplace. Acker (1990) argues that the organisational structures in the workplace are not gender-neutral, and there is an issue linked to considering people who work as abstract entities. She analyses how gender, emotions and sexuality have been excluded from jobs and the workplace. Therefore, Acker (1990) affirms, there is a necessity to build a theory in which male domination, invisibilisation of women and masculinity are considered. This paper is a cornerstone for considering gender within the workplace. Nevertheless, it is addressed from a binary and essentialist point of view which does not consider those feminine bodies could perform masculinity and does not consider subaltern masculinities such as trans masculinities.

Califia (2006) discusses how women using masculinity as a tool for being recognised is problematic. For instance, the way in which they talk or give orders in the workplace only is legitimised when they are considered men. On the other hand, the author states that after starting hormone treatment it was easier for him to be "bossy" or "assertive", giving some legitimation to the physiological dimension of testosterone. Reinforcing this argument about the legitimisation of masculinity, Schilt (2006) analyses the privileges and advantages within the workplace of FTM people in two steps: before and after transitioning. The paper reveals that there are many advantages that are related to the privilege of masculinity such as authority, status and promotions. Schilt (2006) challenges arguments that suggest that comparing men's and women's experiences in the workplace to demonstrate differential

treatment based on gender expression is impossible, as the skills sets and education will vary between individuals. Schilt (2006), on the other hand, looks at the same person (with the same set of skills but different gender expressions). As such, the data is most certainly comparable. Thus, this work shows that same person performing femininity and masculinity are seen and legitimised in a different way. This paper helps to legitimate the theory that there is gender oppression in jobs, and it is not only about hegemonic masculinity: subaltern masculinities –such as gay men and trans masculinities – in some way are hierarchised above femininity.

Thus, it is noticeable that gender hierarchies – in which masculinities are at the top – shape the dynamics within the workplace, provoking access to privileges, promotions and visibility by the gender that people perform there. In consequence, people who perform femininity are marginalised from these spaces. In conclusion, lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs are the identities that are less privileged and they face more obstacles in relation to their masculine counterparts.

Hence, it is fundamental to construct new queer readings of geographies, hybridising and re-theorising, interrogating to make visible the invisible possibilities and desires (Bell and Valentine, 1995). This final thought raises the concept that will close this theoretical/conceptual chapter: (in)visiblilisiation, because lesbians and bisexual women within LGBTQ NGOs, as bodies that transgress heteropatriarchal norms, including trespassing the private sphere of life, are invisibilised and marginalised within the LGBTQ movement and its organisations.

(In)visibility/marginalisation

The concept of (in)visibility is used broadly within social sciences, from psychology to political sciences and management. It is used to refer to some kind of marginalisation, lack of recognition or, literally, as not being visible, as suffered by groups of people that do not accomplish the requirements

in a specific environment. Groups that have been discriminated against historically include people of colour, women and sexual minorities. However, there is no consensus about the meaning of invisibilisation as each area of study tends to take the concept for granted without challenging its local meaning (Brighenti, 2007). As such, the situated use of the concept has led to different meanings and perspectives being attributed to (in)visibility. Therefore, misunderstandings and contradictory ways of applying the term have proliferated across disciplines (Steinbugler, 2005). Therefore, in this section, I consider and map the different meanings of invisibilisation with a view to narrowing its definition for the purposes of making the term relevant to my research project.

In the first instance, visibility refers to the fact of being seen, as part of a sense. However, when it refers to individuals or groups that have been marginalised or excluded from specific spheres, invisibilisation is not only about seeing them. It has different understandings depending on the context and field in which it is used (Brighenti, 2007). (In)visibility is not a fixed category, but a dynamic and symbolic process in which power relations and perception are intertwined (Brighenti, 2007; Moreno, 2008).

The process of (in)visibility is relational, hierarchical, and to some extent relies on a dichotomy structure. It is important to make this part clear, as the majority of the elements in social understanding and language are relational: when we signify something it is in relation to other, making a value of it; thus to say that something is invisible we are relating it to something more visible (hierarchy). Thus, if any group in society is invisible it is because we are associating it with another group that is more visible. Generally, the most visible groups are related to higher social hierarchies and power relations constructed historically, such as the androcentric system and heteronormativity (Steinbugler, 2005; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008); and at the same time by other perspectives and ways to understand (in)visibility. Nevertheless, in that way, these groups tend to be the least visible because they belong

to the people that are within the norm. Hence, (in)visibility is a process of normalisation: things or people who have been historically assumed as part of any specific sphere are understood as invisible or unnoticeable, because of the normalisation of that group in that specific context, and these dominant groups impose their own rules for recognition and validation (Franklin, 1999).

Thus, (in)visibility has different dimensions. First, the act of being seen is directly related to the idea of being known or existent in society or a specific sphere of life. For example, scholars such as Hennessy (1994) and Rand (2013) address (in)visibility as a matter of being seen in the mass media, which is not social recognition and can causes an empty visibility (Rand, 2013). This means that there is no difference in the social status of this specific group being visible or invisible. Under this idea of (in)visibility, sexual minorities can be recognised and known by appearing in TV or with media impact. However, this visibilisation is not considered as very positive, because it tends to be only a product of the market and not related with recognition. Thus, visibilisation in this context can work to reproduce damaging stereotypes. Another way of understanding (in)visibility is in a spatial and physical sense, as argued by Podmore (2006) who considers visibility as the adoption of spaces. This approach is directly related to the idea of "coming out" and all the concerns that it implies, both positive and negative, such as discrimination, violence or recognition as part of that specific society and not precisely as equal citizens with rights, access to resources and opportunities.

The second dimension is about individual (in)visibility. Different scholars (Nan van den Bergh, 1994; Fassinger, 1995; Lewis and Simpson, 2010; Stead, 2013) analyse (in)visibility of sexual minorities and women as individual subjects and find that implies different issues which are not positive, such as stigma in the workplace, discrimination and harassment. This approach to (in)visibility discusses the advantages and disadvantages of lesbians and heterosexual women being visible in their places of work and the struggle of being leaders. It discusses how visibility tends to generate marginalisation and

pressure for individual subjects, in this case, women. Because hegemonic gender norms are relevant in the dynamics of spaces and institutions, as we know. Thus, for example for men – who are the norm – invisibility tends to be positive and underpins the exercise of (some) power (Lewis and Simpson, 2010), while for women (outside the norm) it signifies a lack of power as they are hidden, marginalised and neglected. Therefore, visibility is considered a tricky position (Stead, 2013), which is the opposite of being positive or desired by the group.

Within these two dimensions, visibility is seen in two ways, as negative or fulfilling the need of a commodity culture (Hennessy, 1994). Consequently, it does not in any way help sexual minorities and women to achieve an equal position in relation to men. It entails that (in)visibility has different meanings and effects and can be positive or negative, depending on to whom or what it is attached. Therefore, this category is not absolute or universal.

In addition, it is fundamental to bear in mind identity as a factor that has an important role in the process of (in)visibility. The idea of (in)visibilisation begins with the identification or sense of belonging to one group. This could be the visible or invisible; for instance, sexual identities that are relegated and have assigned negative social values against heteronormativity which has a higher social hierarchy. However, the recognition of the other in relation to (in)visibility is directly related to this recognition of themselves and the other as part of any group. Hence, to be in this process of (in)visibilisation it is important to consider identity and the social burden that it implies, negative or positive, where applicable.

Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) highlight one element that has been overlooked within both dimensions. They analyse (in)visibility taking into account the factor of intersectionality, which is fundamental to this research. They consider that when a group experiences marginalisation for more than one factor (ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class), the invisibilisation is more complex to analyse and

it is necessary to consider all these aspects and their context because this marginalisation is not measurable. For example, it is not possible to say that a white middle class lesbian and a working class black heterosexual woman suffer the same invisibilisation. Hence, it is fundamental to consider intersectionality to address issues of (in)visibility.

Finally, Brouwer (1998), Moreno (2008) and Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) address the concept of (in)visibility from the perspective of political matters. From this approach, it implies recognition and representation is not only being seen but also heard to have access to resources and rights and legitimacy (or lack of). The literature about the importance or how useful and important it is to be visible for sexual minorities is contradictory, but this is related to the perspective. Visibility is understood as being visible as individual subjects, as a collective in the spaces and mass media and as a collective related to the recognition of their rights (politically).

Consequently, for this research I use the concept of (in)visibility from a political perspective taking into account intersectionality. My main aim is to refer to the position in which lesbians and bisexual women find themselves in LGBTQ NGOs with respect to the rest of individuals, taking into account first heteronormativity and second male domination within the LGBTQ sphere. For this reason, I am employing the category of (in)visibility from the idea of recognition (or lack thereof). From this perspective, it is related to the signification of the other (Mead in Brighenti, 2007), which is associated directly with social visibility and the fundamental relation between minorities and the mainstream (Brighenti, 2007). In addition, there is a necessity of this group to gain recognition and be seen (Lewis and Simpson, 2010), because lesbians are less visible than gay men are (Nan van den Bergh, 1994). In conclusion, I will use (in)visibility in the sense of recognition of lesbians and bisexual women within the dynamics of the LGBTQ organisations. In this context, visibility is a privilege of the mainstream, specifically in this case, gay men and heterosexuals.

Thus, it is important to highlight that there is marginalisation in academia about LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. This echoes the assertion that the international development domain invisibilises LGBTQ people. Lesbians and bisexual women are invisibilised further – they face a double or even treble process of marginalisation – because they "do not fulfil prescribed gender and sexual norms in their societies" (Lind, 2009, p. 34).

Conclusions

During this chapter, I explored the different theories that will inform my research, focusing on feminist theory and narrowing to a specific account of sexuality, the political lesbianism branch of feminism, that helps to understand one of the perspectives to dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. However, feminist theory, as I mentioned before, is not enough to explain inequalities regarding sexuality. Therefore I use queer theory to cover that aspect. Queer theory, unlike lesbian and gay studies, analyses and challenges fixed binary systems and, in so doing, sheds light on multiple marginalised sexualities. It interrogates not only the heterosexual norm but also homonormativity, considering other elements such as gender, race, class. In other words, queer theory is intersectional. This element is fundamental to analysing the gender dynamics of lesbians and bisexual women in NGOs in Mexico because it is necessary to take into account not only their sexual orientation, but also all the other elements that shape their specific realities. Even though queer theory has been criticised by some feminist scholars (Jeffreys, 1999; Mogroevejo, 2010; Paredes, 2015) because it erases gender difference, in this research I draw on both feminist theory and queer theory as complementary theoretical tools to take into account the importance of gender.

In addition, within the chapter, I discussed bisexuality, which has not been encompassed fully within either queer or feminist theory but, instead has been relegated and marginalised. This has led to a

scarcity of research focusing on bisexual people's identity and, in relation to this thesis, how they fit in LGBTQ spaces. I also addressed how masculinity is performed in workplaces and the relevance of it to have access to specific spaces, highlighting the relevance of socialisation and phallocentric societies. The final section discussed two different concepts that are linked to each other: (queer) spaces and (in)visibilisation. Spaces perpetuate social norms that serve heteropatriarchal norms, hiding and invisibilising all the bodies/subjects that do not fulfil these norms, such as lesbians and bisexual women.

CHAPTER THREE
Methodology: The road to understand gender dynamics in NGOs (Mexico)

Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to explaining the underlying research philosophy and methodology of this research project. I elaborate on the research design used and the process of the data collection as well as the strategies to analyse the data gathered. In addition, I reflect upon the ethical considerations, together with acknowledging self-reflectivity, which is necessary to grasp this project and its implications holistically. Nevertheless, it is first relevant to revisit the aims and direction of this research project. This research project aims to analyse the ways in which lesbians and bisexual women negotiate gender and sexuality dynamics within NGOs advocating LGBTQ issues in Mexico. Moreover, it seeks to inform international development scholarship and practice, which has historically systematically marginalised and invisibilised women who identify in these ways. Indeed, literature regarding sexuality in international development for the specific area of Mexico is sparse, and empirical analysis of these matters has not yet, to my knowledge, been conducted. Therefore, this

investigation also seeks to visibilise the unequal and problematic power relations that lesbians and bisexual women face regarding gender and sexuality in this arena.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. First, I address my research questions, as well as my hypotheses; then I explain the philosophical approach that I took, which is interpretative, with a feminist/queer epistemology informed by poststructuralism. At the same time, I address the matter of my self-reflectivity as a researcher, which is directly related to the approach that I am taking. In addition, I describe and explain why using qualitative methods is the most appropriate for the research project. The second section is dedicated to describing in detail the collection of the data and the strategy to get the participants. Moreover, I explain the process of interviewing and the general experience of the fieldwork, the expectations, limitations and the elements that shaped and have an influence upon understandings of gender dynamics for this thesis. Finally, the third section explains the process of interpreting the data, which was done using an inductive/deductive method. Moreover, to close the chapter, I end by talking about the ethical implications of the research, and its limits.

Research Methodology

Research questions

In order to set the tone for this chapter, this section details my research questions and the expected answers to those questions. The main research questions are:

(i) How do lesbians and bisexual women experience and negotiate gender and sexuality dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?

(ii) What factors have contributed to the failure of lesbians and bisexual women in getting their agendas heard in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?

(iii) Why are lesbians and bisexual women marginalised, invisibilised and ghettoised in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?

These three questions are addressed in the following two empirical chapters as well in the discussion chapter.

In response to these research questions, I expect to find that lesbians and bisexual women are invisibilised within LGBT NGOs in Mexico, due to the way that dynamics of gender and sexuality are (re)produced by heteropatriarchal structures in these institutions. Further, regarding question (ii) I anticipate that lesbians and bisexual women face additional obstacles in fully engaging with LGBT NGOs relative to their male counterparts and these barriers replicate inequalities related to gender in line with heteropatriarchal norms. Overall, the data set will help to explore the ways in which these NGOs challenge and reproduce power relations associated with gender and sexuality – which is particularly important given that these NGOs are at the forefront of gender and sexuality politics at a national and international level.

This research was prompted by my search of the UNDP directory that found that only one of the LGBTQ NGOs listed has a woman as CEO (Programa Regional sobre VIH SIDA LAC, 2010). Therefore, policy and projects related to lesbians and bisexual women are, I anticipated, less considered than projects and policies related to HIV/AIDS and gay men.

Philosophical approach

Before explaining the practical elements and strategy I employed to answer my research question and fulfil the aims of the research project, it is paramount to discuss my philosophical position as a researcher. My philosophical approach is shaped by my interest in researching unequal power relations regarding gender as well as a commitment to visibilising women that have been marginalised

historically. Ontology refers to the understanding of social reality and the nature of that reality (Neuman, 2013), and epistemology refers to the way that we acquire or understand reality: "a set of procedures for establishing what counts as knowledge in providing rules that specify how to produce valid knowledge of social reality" (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, p. 18). Ontology and epistemology are important because they shape understandings of gender, power relations and sexuality and how those categories are organised symbolically and materially. Relatedly, this thesis recognises that society has an important role in the production of knowledge, which has influenced my approach to this research.

As I mentioned directly above, my central research question is: how do lesbians and bisexual women involved in LGBTQ NGOs experience gender and sexuality dynamics that marginalise them in said organisations in Mexico? Thus, the focus of my research constitutes specifically how LGBTQ NGOs promote and (re)produce sexuality and gender identities and dynamics. The study focuses geographically on Mexico due to its recent surge of initiatives and NGOs that sought to promote LGBTQ rights in the face of various forms of discrimination (López, 2017). Hence, Mexico has experienced an increase in the number of NGOs looking to improve LGBTQ life conditions. In addition, it is fundamental to highlight that, despite the effort to produce research about lesbians and bisexual women in the global development industry, there has been no comprehensive academic and/or policy-informing work done on this topic. Consequently, employing a feminist approach, which implies being conscious of your own experience and positionality, this thesis interprets and analyses the experiences of other women, simultaneously promoting their voices as well as mine (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992). However, as discussed in the theoretical framework, a feminist approach, while useful, does not fulfil all the requirements of this research. Thus, to some extent, my approach is also informed by poststructuralism and queer theory, which I recognise as useful for "highlight[ing] the instability of taken-for-granted meanings and resulting power relations" (Browne

and Nash, 2010, p. 4). In addition, this approach understands the binary systems that organise power relations as produced through accepted knowledge regimes and, in so doing, contests the notion of a singular truth. Consequently, the relevance of understanding experiences, situations and interpretations that are fluid, what was said, and interpreted in this research talk about a particular situation in a specific context, which are not universal. This project talks about a specific moment in the history of LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. As Haraway (in Wickramasinghe, 2009) states, "the play of subjectivity and human capacity [and] knowledge can only be partial and situated, rather than transcendent, and social action, [is] conditional and pragmatic." (p. 1).

Research approach

As noted above, my research is informed by poststructuralist approaches. This means that I recognise that there are multiple ways of understanding realities (Thomas, 2017). In that spirit, this project rejects the idea of a universalising truth, instead it is interpreting different forms of discourse in order to interrogate existing power relations and how they are constituted and preserved in the production of social and political realities (Browne and Nash, 2010). With that, as well as my feminist positionality, in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that this project adopts a qualitative approach. In addition, the purpose of the research project, among other objectives, is to visibilise women and promote their voices and, in so doing, generate knowledge from this political position, visibilising those people whose voices are ordinarily silenced or undermined within research practices. Furthermore, qualitative approaches facilitate analysing topics which involve subjective and personal experience, embedded in discourse and subjectivities of each participant. Hence this research design is the most suitable to gather and analyse the data to meet this project's critical and normative aims.

Indeed, the focus of my research is well suited to deductive analysis, which is broadly related to qualitative designs and could be summarised as the finding of theory coming from the data, as well as

being inductive in design. In other words, the research design is primarily deductive, going from the findings to the theory, in this specific research project. While the research is influenced by queer and feminist theory, as well as the literature about how gender dynamics are negotiated within LGBTQ NGOs, along with a hypothesis, using a deductive/inductive approach allowed me to find new paths and develop new concepts, and thereby worked as the theoretical foundation of my research after collecting and analysing the data. Having discussed my research philosophy and approach, in the next section I explain in detail the strategy and process for collecting data that I employed.

Collection of data

Getting the right informants

To be able to understand the gender and sexuality dynamics of LGBTQ NGOs I decided to interview people involved within the LGBTQ arena, specifically those involved in LGBTQ NGOs. I chose two different profiles:

1. Lesbians or bisexual women that have been involved in an NGO advocating LGBTQ issues, or in NGOs advocating for lesbians and bisexual women exclusively; here I considered different characteristics such as age, position and academic background to hopefully accomplish contrasting profiles.

2. CEOs of LGBTQ NGOs or NGOs of lesbians and bisexual women, in order to glean insights into the organisational consensus on how lesbians and bisexual women are represented and understood by said NGOs – at least superficially – and what initiatives are in place relevant to lesbians and bisexual women.

All participants worked in three types of organisation:

(i) NGOs advocating broadly LGBTQ issues

(ii) NGOs focused exclusively on lesbians

(iii) NGOs advocating issues of non-heterosexual women.

For a more in-depth description of the getting the right participants, appendix B disaggregates the profile of each NGO as well as the profile of each participant, as well as providing a map to grasp in-depth the quotes used in the empirical chapters. Table 1, below, for the purpose of this chapter, shows the general relevant information of the participants' selection.

The interviewees ranged from 22 years to 73 years and identified across the spectrum of sexuality as lesbian, bisexual (women), gay and heterosexual. The gender identities with which the interviewees self-identified were cis-man, cis-woman, non-binary feminine and trans man. I was conscious of data saturation, and so limited my participants' selection when I could no longer retrieve new findings in the data collection (Bryman, 2015).

Letter	Place	Target population	#	Sexual & Gender identity	Role
A	Mexico City	Sexual minorities	10	Lesbian	CEO
			18	Lesbian	Administrative
B	Mexico City	Population on risk of HIV/AIDS and sexual minorities	13	Bisexual	CEO
C	Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas	LGBTQ community	19	Lesbian	CEO/Workshop facilitator
D	Mexico City	Lesbians	5	Lesbian	Research and Project Manager
			11	Lesbian	Ex CEO
E	León, Guanajuato	Lesbian, bisexual and Trans women	12	Lesbian	CEO
F	México City	Women	4	Bisexual	Autonomous

			14	Bisexual	Autonomous
G	Central Region	LGBTQ and young community in prison	7	Gay	CEO
			15	Lesbian	Workshop facilitator and project manager
H	Mexico	LGBTQ community	1	Gay	CEO
			6	Lesbian	Psychological Support (Safe hour)
I	Aguascalientes	LGBTQ community	8	Lesbian	Convenor
J	Mexico City	Lesbian, bisexual and Trans women	2	Lesbian	Communication and PR
			17	Trans man	CEO
K	Puebla	Population on risk of HIV/AIDS	3	Lesbian	Administrative
L	Mexico City	LGBTQ community	16	Lesbian	Convenor
			9	Gay	CEO

Table 1

Finding the participants

I used a snowball technique to find the participants, meaning that:

> "the researcher initially samples a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research. These participants will then suggest others and so on." (Bryman, 2015, p. 415)

Therefore, first I contacted two people who subsequently worked as gatekeepers. They led me to three different organisations, one of which, dedicated to women that have been working with a wider lesbians and bisexual community, contacted me with some women that were interested in the focus and objectives of my project.

The process to locate and secure CEO participants from the larger LGBTQ NGOs was more complex. This was because they were less interested in participating in the research. This may have been due to them having less investment in the wider objectives of the project, namely, interrogating the gender inequalities that persist in the LGBTQ sector more broadly (I talk about my experiences as a researcher in the process of collecting data later in this chapter). Despite these difficulties, I eventually found some CEOs interested in participating in the research.

Conducting interviews

With a view to addressing my research questions, I conducted **19** interviews. I felt that interviews are more appropriate for gleaning insight into the experiences and subjectivities of my participants, as well as providing data on the broader understandings of their specific situation or context. Moreover, interviews help the researcher to explore people's views of reality and subsequently to generate theory and maximise discovery and description (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992). As such, this technique allowed me to analyse and reflect upon, not just gender dynamics and how they are negotiated within the institutions, but also how participants identify themselves in political, economic and socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, this technique contributed to finding factors which are interwoven in the participants' subjectivity, as these are more likely to be shown during face-to-face conversations in a spontaneous way.

I adopted a semi-structured interview approach as this kind of interview provides a general framework to help manage the relevance of the data set alongside a certain level of flexibility in case the interview unearths an alternative, but relevant, line of enquiry by allowing a level of free interaction between researcher and interviewee (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992). In other words, the interview schedule helps the researcher to prioritise questions linking to the key research objectives while allowing the flexibility to accommodate additional relevant views and information that the participant wishes to

share (Thomas, 2017). In addition, the flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows the participants to bring in topics that they themselves consider relevant, leading to a much more participant-led, and therefore co-produced, piece of research. Overall, semi-structured interviews work to promote a conversational, relaxed and spontaneous style that fits perfectly with the aims of this research. The interviewee guide that I used is in appendix A.

Experiences and specifics of the collection

During the fieldwork, from locating and securing the participants to the transcription and analysis of interviews, I went through some experiences that I think shaped the way I collected the data, as well as the way in which this data was analysed. The following section details some of these experiences and observations.

First, I would like to reflect on the relevance of my identity in the research. The fact that I am a Mexican and non-heterosexual woman played an important role in the rapport created with the participants. Many mentioned that when they saw the researcher was from a foreign university, they felt mistrust. In fact, it is telling that one NGO told me that they would charge me for each hour of talk – reflecting their reluctance to engage with 'foreign' researchers. Given the request for an interview fee, I decided not to interview that NGO. However, for the majority of NGOs, once they knew more about my position and identity as a person and researcher, they accepted my invitation and most welcomed the opportunity to participate in this project.

Regarding their interest in being part of the research, I noticed different levels of enthusiasm. NGOs advocating for lesbians and bisexual women were more interested in participating. Similarly, participants who recognise themselves as lesbians or bisexual women were more responsive than their gay male counterparts in the more established LGBTQ organisations that are in vogue nowadays in

Mexico. As noted above, the participants I found most challenging to secure were the CEOs that identify as gay men. I tried to contact two established NGOs, both of which have existed for more than 30 years and both of which are led by gay male CEOs. Neither, however, demonstrated an interest in participating in my project. This may have been because these CEOs were not invested in the project's topic and/or because these CEOs are regarded as activist icons of the LGBTQ movement in Mexico. Relatedly, I had a specific experience with another CEO of one of the organisations that I was interested in working with. He declined my invitation to participate, explicitly saying that he was not interested because my research was looking to show gender inequalities, something he was disinclined to do as it would damage the image of the organisation. Conversely, women working in the LGBTQ realm tended to be very supportive and helped me to find new participants to be interviewed, in Mexico City as well as in other regions of the country. In fact, in casting a 'wider net' these networks assisted in helping to decentralise my project to include areas of Mexico more remote than Mexico City (where admittedly the majority of the NGOs are located).

Second, I think it is worth briefly discussing the process of interviewing. Overall, this was a good experience as it developed my skills as a feminist researcher in general. The rapport built between my participants and me, partly due to my identity as a non-heterosexual Mexican woman, helped to generate empathy. All the women that I interviewed were very interested in sharing their experiences, and the hindrances and advantages as well as the rewards of being activists. As a researcher and non-activist, it resulted in an experience of personal learning and development. Each interview was different and, while they all went well, some were smoother than others, especially with the participants that shared age or interests and with whom I could build a better rapport. The most challenging interviews were with two CEO women. The first is an important academic and an icon in LGBTQ and feminist activism in Mexico. This interview was more difficult to negotiate because of the authority afforded to her as an academic and activist. However, the interview schedule was useful

here as it helped me to carry that one out in a successful way, because the guide supported me to not lose track in spite of nervousness, so I felt in control of the process. The other interview that I found challenging was one I conducted with the CEO of another organisation, a visually impaired heterosexual woman. This participant's visual impairment was unexpected because I did not know about this until I arrived at the interview. At such, I felt self-conscious about ensuring the interview was not perceived as condescending while also responding to the participant's needs. In all, the interview was very interesting, and it worked very well, despite my lack of skills and knowledge about the visual impairment, creating awareness in my research skills linked to ableism: for example, my information sheet and consent form was not planned to fulfil these specific needs. In addition, it helped to acknowledge how sexuality cuts across other personal identities.

Generally, throughout my fieldwork I tended to conduct the interviews in public spaces such as coffee shops. I left the choice of the specific coffee shop to the participants, to ensure their own convenience; sometimes these were coffee shops in the gay area of Mexico City, or others in different parts of the city. I felt that this was the best option considering the neutrality of the spaces for both the participants and the researcher. These public spaces offered a relaxed environment where experiences regarding the workplaces as well as their peers and superiors could be shared openly. It contrasts, however, with one particular interview I conducted with a lesbian volunteer. In this case, the CEO (a gay man) insisted that the lesbians give the interview in front of him, presumably to monitor or even censor what the participant was saying. This very likely resulted in a bias in the information given, making it very difficult to include in my data set. In addition, the CEO interrupted my participant during the process. In the end, the interview lasted only half an hour because it was impossible to maintain a relaxed and natural conversation.

Overall, throughout the series of interviews I conducted, I was keen as far as possible to facilitate a relaxed environment to encourage a conversational and, hopefully, candid discussion. With that in mind, I decided to record all the interviews so that I did not have to take notes and I could pay full attention to the conversation. At the same time, this allowed me to explore deeper topics that were relevant for the research because my attention was not divided. In addition, having the recordings helped to ensure that the transcription, and consequently interpretation, of the data, was accurate and true to what the participant actually said. I consider the recordings as a great tool. However, admittedly, in the beginning, it was difficult to get used to having a recorder in front of you while talking to a participant, although eventually the presence of the recording device became less obvious, especially when I used a smartphone.

Finally, there was considerable overlap in the information that all the participants shared. In particular, all the participants acknowledged a general feeling of lack of access to labour rights in the realm of activism and NGOs and feeling at a social and economic disadvantage permanently. This is linked directly with their roles as volunteers, engaging in work for which they cannot charge or earn money. The expectations around, and feminisation of, voluntary work is discussed in more detail later in this thesis in the first empirical chapter. In addition, I found that there was a collective feeling regarding trans women. The majority of the interviewees, some of whom held explicitly transphobic views, felt that trans women were inhabiting their spaces and receiving greater attention and benefits within the LGBTQ sector. Further, these participants tended to perceive trans women as aggressive, demonstrating the complex and sometimes fractious relationship between lesbians and trans women. However, it is crucial to say that some of my participants were trans-feminist, recognising trans women as women with a right to share the same spaces.

After sharing the particularities of my experience, the next section explains the way in which all the data gathered from my 19 interviews were interpreted and analysed. Here I address the challenges that arose in translating and interpreting data in two different languages at the same time.

Analysing the data

In order to explain my process of the analysis of the data, it is worth mentioning that I recorded, translated and transcribed all the interviews. These interview transcriptions served as my main source of interpretation and analysis.

Deductive/inductive research

The method used to analyse the data is an inductive/deductive, understanding it as an iterative process, and although that is presented as a step by step process, it implies a reflexive process (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Thus, the process of analysing the data, and in general doing the research, is both deductive and inductive, blurring the binary idea of reality and research (Lather and Pierre, 2013). Therefore, I understand the research as a process that encompasses both deductive and inductive perspectives, given my position as a poststructuralist researcher, and specifically, because this investigation is made from that framework, theory and method cannot be understood in isolation (Browne and Nash, 2010).

Hence, using the transcriptions of all interview data, I engaged in a general 'first' reading of the material intending to identify the most prominent recurring topics, so I used thematic analysis. The 'first' reading allowed me to generate a set of codes and themes that encompassed situations and dynamics occurring in the LGBTQ arena in Mexico. This was more on the inductive side, while the hypothesis and the basis of the investigation were based more on the deductive side, but my research involved a

dialogue between both, moving from one to another throughout each iteration. As an example of this I can say that while I came to the research with certain expectations about gender dynamics, for example, the marginalisation of lesbians and bisexual women in the LGBTQ movement, I did not develop a hypothesis about the specific reasons and factors for these unequal dynamics. Thus, it was from the data gathered and interpreted that I was able to develop my theoretical chapter and my empirical and discussion chapters.

Threads

Regarding the codes and lines that help to explain the dynamics and that encompass the core of the empirical research, I developed seven different threads/codes, which were the core of the empirical chapters.

- Hierarchisation of identities: This thread was the most repeated by the participants. The feeling of prioritisation of some identities over others structurally was present in almost all the interviews. This was complemented with a recognition that some identities have greater access to spaces and resources than others.

- Advantages in performing masculinity[9]: Most of the participants directly or implicitly expressed that people who perform masculinity (cis men) tend to be positioned higher up the LGB hierarchy, having greater access to spaces and being more visible.

- Sense of belonging to the LGBTQ and feminist community: This is one of the topics that was also highlighted in the literature. Non-heterosexual women struggle to feel they belong to these two

[9] This code refers exclusively to LGB people, because trans identities are built over different considerations, for example, trans women, as I stated in the first empirical chapter, who are allocated more resources because they are regarded as 'higher risk' by development agencies are in a higher position, while trans men are at the bottom of the hierarchy although they perform masculinity. This is because the essentialist beliefs among participants position trans women in the because they have or had a penis, while trans men are conflated with masculine lesbians and so invisibilised by being misplaced within the hierarchy.

different spaces, in which theoretically they should feel accepted. This, I argue, is a symptom of their invisibilisation,

- The ghettoisation of lesbians and bisexual women: As a consequence of the lack of belonging and lack of access to resources, the creation of spaces only for lesbians and bisexual women is also a matter that is pointed out in the interviews.

- Negotiation of romantic relationships: This matter seems to be very relevant in the construction of NGOs exclusive to lesbians and bisexual women. I go on to argue that this shows that gendered socialisation has permeated the way in which women in the NGOs build relationships and prioritise their personal/emotional relationships within the workplace.

- Access to resources: This issue is also a constant concern to the participants because the donors do not consider funding issues or agendas that affect lesbians and bisexual women directly.

- Queer spaces: The need for belonging to spaces as part of a shared identity is a matter that links to previous threads. This is relevant to building alternatives to strengthen identity and create new ways of visibilisation.

Translation

Another central element in the data gathering and interpretation relates to language. As I mentioned previously, my research is based in Mexico and, consequently, all the interviews were in Spanish. It is important to point this out because concepts are not independent of the language in which they are expressed (Butler, 2019). Therefore, translation and interpretation are interrelated and play a relevant role. I carefully translated relevant interview extracts to English for use in the empirical chapters. During this process, I sought to preserve the meaning and the voice of my participants, relaying what they wanted to express rather than producing just literal translation. In other words, I used a tool to translate, but taking care of non-literal information, as well as slang. In addition, I sent to my interviewees the extracts that I am using, in English and Spanish, to make sure that they agreed with

the interpretation/translation that I made of their experiences. This is in the same line as Rice and Ezzy (in Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) regarding interpretative rigour, using the raw data for interpretation. Moreover, I designed the consent form as well as the interview guide in Spanish, given that I was conscious of a need to build rapport, which I considered was easier to achieve if the questions were constructed in Spanish. English translations of these two documents were presented for the ethics approval and are available in the appendix.

Ethical considerations

One of the elements pivotal to conducting this research is the ethical considerations. Ethical consideration is essential for any project and can be understood as the

> "ethical principles [that] encompass some decisions and dilemmas that do not just pit right against wrong, but balance one right action against another right action, taking into account the possibly conflicting interests of the parties involved" (Thomas, 2017, p. 201)

The ethical considerations taken in this research are based directly on the University of Birmingham Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review guidelines and the research design was fully approved by the University prior to my fieldwork taking place[10].

As I mentioned earlier, I conducted interviews. There are multiple ethical considerations when using interviews as the basis for a project. As such, I took a series of steps with this in mind. First, at the initial point of contact with my participant, I explained the aims of the project and what I was researching. Despite the deductive elements of this research developing throughout the process, I endeavoured to be as open as I could. The only information that I omitted with the candidates and

[10] Application for Ethical Review ERN_17-0336.

interviewees was my hypothesis about the unequal power relations related to gender within LGBTQ NGOs. Rather, I explained that I was analysing how lesbians and bisexual women negotiated gender and sexuality dynamics within these organisations.

After they accepted the invitation to be interviewed I shared an information sheet with all the participants (see appendix C). The information sheet details the participant's role in the research project, as well as their rights (for example, the right to withdraw from the project until January 2020, the right to decide between being recorded or not, and so on). Interestingly, all of the participants agreed to be recorded. The information sheet aimed to ensure that the participants were fully aware of the expectations of the project and the nature of their involvement before providing consent. Further, the information sheet outlined my responsibilities as a researcher having access to their data and personal information more generally. The information sheet, then, outlined participants' rights to be anonymised and that the confidence of their data would remain confidential and it would not be shared, addressed later in this chapter.

Finally, in relation to ethical considerations, the third step relevant to highlight here occurred on the day of the interviews. To ensure the security of all the interviewees, as well as of myself as a researcher, all the interviews were conducted in public spaces. When I introduced myself, I made my role as researcher clear, in line with being clear about the project itself and their role within it. I explained the duration of the interview (which is also in the information sheet) and I declared that I was going to record the interviews (with their permission). In addition, I was very explicit that participants did not have to answer all the questions and that they could stop the interview at any moment. Finally, satisfied that my participants were fully informed about the project, I gave them the consent form to sign, which is in appendix D.

While these were the ethical considerations regarding the exact moment of collecting the data with the participants, there were additional considerations relevant to after the collection of the data.

Anonymity

Considering that the participants were sharing information that might compromise their position – namely talking about unequal gender relations within the workplace – I felt it paramount to ensure the anonymity of all the participants. While full anonymity could not be granted, as the participant was known to me, I ensured that pseudo-anonymity was afforded through removing all the identifying features attached to the data after the interviews. In the analysis, I utilise pseudonyms for the quotes presented in the empirical and discussion chapters. In addition, the names of the NGOs remain confidential, to further ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Moreover, to ensure that participants had no objections to the material I used in the thesis, I sent each participant the excerpt in Spanish and the translation in English that I planned to include in my thesis. I thought it was important to provide participants with this information to make sure that they were happy with how their words would be presented, especially in light of the fact that this thesis will be in the public domain. Concerning confidentiality, all the transcriptions in Spanish, as well as the recordings, will be stored on encrypted files as University of Birmingham guidelines request.

Limits

The decision to do qualitative research in itself often implies bias. This is because, generally speaking, the researcher invests considerable interpretative labour in making sense of the data. However, while this is frequently a charge made against qualitative research, I consider that all methods can be critiqued at this level as all include researcher bias from the very outset of the project (when the question is

constructed) to the interpretation of data. What is important then, as a researcher, is to acknowledge, rather than deny, one's biases in interpreting data. Concerning the selection of the participants,, I acknowledge that I did not include transsexual women. Having analysed the gender dynamics and the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women within the LGBTQ NGOs, I am mindful that my focus excluded the experiences of transsexual women (lesbians or bisexual) and that this implies a bias. However, it is equally important to note that trans identities tend to belong to other NGOs, ones that are focused more on gender identity agendas and/or HIV/AIDS. Consequently, I did not find anyone interested in participating who recognised herself as lesbian/bisexual trans woman. Similarly, I did not secure interviews with non-binary people who identify themselves within the feminine spectrum and as bisexuals or lesbians. Moreover, the exclusion of lesbians and bisexual women that are not involved in these NGOs implies a bias as my research could not reflect their experiences within the broader society. However, as my research, like any research, is unable to capture everything and is especially interested in how gender hierarchies are reproduced within LGBTQ organisations, it was my prerogative to narrow the data set to focus on lesbians and bisexual women within the sector.

As well as the parameters I set around the research focus, the scope of my research could be considered limiting. This is because my project examines the gender dynamics and hierarchies of a specific period of time, as well as in a specific region. However, the research aimed to take a snapshot of the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women in order to explain, analyse and visibilise the specific dynamics that are shaping gender relations within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. Ultimately, the research seeks to promote the voices and make more visible the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women in this region. Consequently, generalisation was not an aim or goal of this investigation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explain why the methods that I chose were the most suitable to achieve the aims and objectives of this thesis. Further, the chapter included reflections on my position as a researcher as well as the nature of the research and the relevance of visibilising the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women involved in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. The chapter outlined each step that I took to carry out the research, from choosing the participants to analysing the data. I also addressed relevant ethical considerations, as well as the matter of translation, considering that this is a bilingual research project. Finally, I tackled the limits and the scope of my research, grasping that this research aims to explain and analyse a contextually specific set of experiences, referring to a specific historical and geographical moment.

CHAPTER FOUR
Problematic gender dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico: Social Relations

Introduction

Grounded in the interview data, this chapter interrogates existing arguments about social relations within the LGBTQ community in Mexico regarding gender, as well as ideas found in relevant literature about gender and sexual orientation in NGOs. The main objective of this chapter is to answer (RQ1) *How do lesbians and bisexual women experience and negotiate gender and sexuality dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?* highlighting the different dynamics related to sexual orientation and gender identities embedded in the LGBTQ NGOs who were the focus of this research. The discussion is centred on three main points: hierarchies regarding identities, the importance of performing masculinities within these organisations, and finally, the role of romantic relationships in affecting the durability of the organisations and their initiatives.

These three themes are the focus of this chapter because they facilitate an understanding of how each of the organisations is configured relative to sexual orientation and/or gender identity, which is the starting point for illustrating the entire picture of the sector. Moreover, this analysis highlights the ways in which different identity manifestations and performances allow and hinder access to different spaces, understanding spaces as physical spaces, funding spaces or spaces to develop their agendas. Furthermore, the chapter addresses how romantic relationships, and the way these relationships with partners develop, affects the character and conduct of these organisations. This chapter is the cornerstone of this thesis in that it helps to make sense of the bigger picture of how gender dynamics are developed and negotiated within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. In addition, it supports the following chapters, drilling down into more specific issues within the participants' organisations.

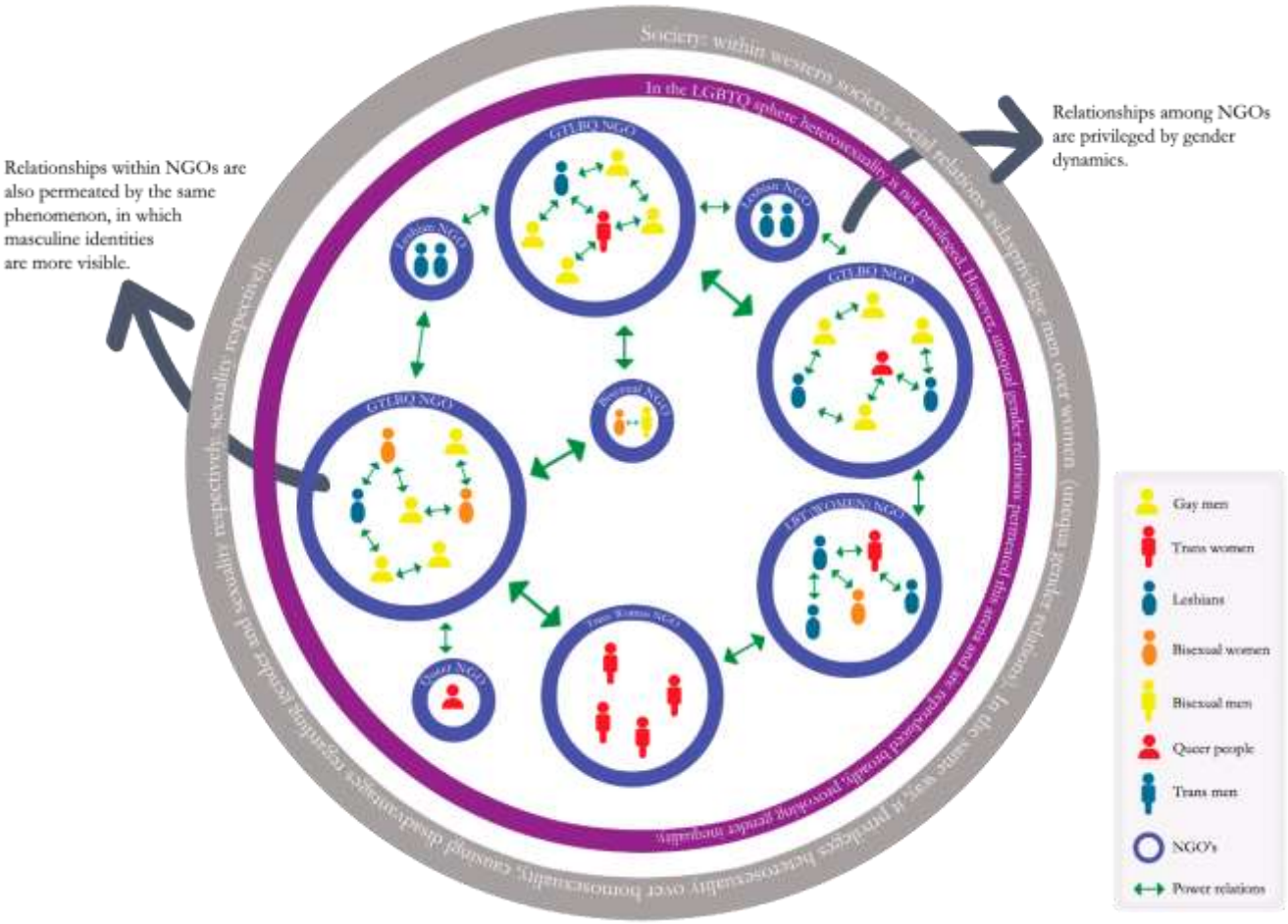
The chapter is structured as follows. In the first section, I develop how within the activists' community of LGBTQ organisations and their inner matters there are different hierarchies regarding each identity. Issues related to visibility guides the second section of this chapter. Here I spend some time exploring how LGBTQ people's performances, when in line with perceived masculinity, is an advantage in the LGBTQ community in Mexico.

This is because despite the efforts to challenge corporate masculinity, it seems that it has not been threatened (Connell, 2016). Consequently, masculinity is still related to activism and political participation as a public activity, and the public space historically has belonged to those culturally intelligible as men, whose bodies are more consistent with the performance of masculinity. Finally, the chapter closes with a third section that discusses how socialisation naturalising women's propensity for emotionality has a strong influence on the manner that labour relations and networking are developed within the participant organisation. While gay men are perceived to have the skills to remain 'professional' and separate their romantic or sexual relationships from labour relationships, lesbians

and bisexual women are considered to prioritise their romantic relationships over professional relationships. As a consequence, many lesbians' and bisexual women's organisations are less sustainable than ones dominated by, or focused on, gay men.

Gender and sexuality hierarchies in LGBTQ NGOs

The LGBTQ movement in Mexico started in 1977 (Fuentes Ponce, 2015). As with other social movements, its main aim was to fight for equal opportunities for people, in this instance those who do not perform normative sexualities and gender identities. However, in Mexico, as a relatively new social movement, it is still very turbulent, partly because of the different perspectives, stages and divisions, causing disadvantages and inequalities within the movement. In this section, I analyse how



these differences among LGBTQ identities are institutionalised in NGOs, because commonly power relations are unequal in both arenas, among NGOs, as well as within them. Thus, each identity (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer) and each organisation has different hierarchies in relation to other organisations and identities, respectively (see figure 2). Consequently, certain disadvantages are embedded in structural issues and hold back the main aim of the LGBTQ movement, which implies the search for equality and the same rights that cis-gender and straight people have.

The organisation of the hierarchy is entrenched in gender relations and/or related to traditional norms of sexuality, which is then related to moral norms, such as monogamy and marriage. It is important to highlight that normativity related to heterosexuality is also embedded in these dynamics of gender. This hierarchy does not have only one side; it is multifaceted – for instance, hierarchy plays out in terms of recognition and legitimacy within the community, access to public spaces, visibilisation of each specific identity, and agendas and funding, which is directly related to legitimacy with sponsors.

Historically, Western society has developed several specific normativities to make sense of sexuality (Foucault, 1990), which include gender identities, gender roles and sexual orientation. They are hierarchised according to moral norms; for instance, heterosexuality, monogamy, marriage and same generation relationships are privileged (Rubin, 1984). Hence, this set of rules not only shapes heterosexual relationships, it shapes identities, as well. This set of rules privileges those who fulfil the norms valorised in systems of heteronormativity. Consequently, different sexualities have different levels of recognition and acceptance. This situation is reproduced in LGBTQ NGOs (homonormativity) in which each letter that represents one identity inhabits different levels, hierarchies and legitimation in different spheres that range from a sense of belonging to access to resources.

According to the data gathered, I found that the construction of this hierarchy is more complex than the letters representing each identity. Its order reflects matters related to gender dynamics embedded in structural issues. Based on my research data, the top identity within the LGBTQ community in Mexico is gay men, and then trans women; these two identities hold the highest positions and demonstrate that access to different privileges is related to three principal matters. First, the popular acceptance of bodies born with biological characteristics related to maleness. Second, the specific sort of socialisation that these bodies receive during childhood, in which they are differentiated from and ranked above bodies with biological characteristics related to femininity; and third, the health policies related to sexuality, which are especially HIV/AIDS related and therefore targeted at those people considered more at risk, notably, men who have sex with men (MSM). The hierarchy continues with lesbians, then bisexuals, and at the end are trans men and queer identities, which are almost completely invisibilised; they do not have enough recognition and legitimacy. The way in which LGBTQ (more realistically the GTwLBTmQ) hierarchy serves a specific vertical/unequal arrangement is one of the key arguments of this research. To deepen this analysis, I now explore each identity separately to analyse and discuss in more detail below.

Gay men

Gay men is the identity that dominates the top of the hierarchy. This identity has a link to structural matters, in which men, in general, have had more access to public space than women (Mogrovejo, 2000; Ward, 2008; Fuentes Ponce, 2015). The access to political participation is in general easier for men (Connell, 2016). A typical comment from one of my interview participants demonstrates this well:

> "In 132 [the social movement] those who were in front were men, the only woman was a spokesperson. However, the public figures that were the most recognised, were all

> men. These guys were super *machistas*; even if they had a super liberal speech." [11] (Interviewee 5[12])

Indeed, the differences in access to public space are reproduced in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico and are noticeable to lesbians and bisexual women within the movement. As another participant, from NGO F, stated:

> "Because as gays they have certain privileges and have seized the flag. When people do not believe me, I say, 'Look when I tell you the demonstration that is going to be on June 23, what is its name?' 'Gay pride march.' 'And lesbians and bisexuals, where do you leave all the other letters?' I answer." [13] (Interviewee 4[14])

> "[Speaking of spaces within the NGO] for men no, you already have many spaces they are everywhere and are the face of LGBT discourse." [15] (Interviewee 2[16])

Therefore, it is clear that cis-gay men, whose identity is most associated with masculinity, reproduce the dynamics of gender that are embedded within the wider heteropatriarchal system in Mexican society. Even though the LGBTQ movement and its spaces to develop their agenda were created with the main objective of eliminating the disadvantages and discrimination that sexual minorities suffer, inequalities in accessing public spaces and visibility are only the tip of the iceberg. This situation results in deeper issues that directly affect other identities, especially lesbians and bisexual women. In other words, it is important to consider additional variables that hinder the LGBTQ community from

[11] En el 132 quienes estaban a frente eran los hombres, la única mujer era vocera. Pero las figuras publica lasa reconocidas, eran hombres todos. Estos weyes súper machistas tenían un discurso acá súper progre.

[12] Interviewee 5 is a young lesbian woman working as research and project manager in NGO D, which is advocated to lesbians only. It is the oldest NGO advocated to lesbians.

[13] Porque ¿cómo? sea los gays tienen como ciertos privilegios y se han apoderado de la bandera, en sí cuando la gente no me cree esto les digo mira "¿cuándo yo te digo de la marcha que va hacer el 23 de junio cómo le llamas?" "la marcha gay" "y las lesbianas y los bisexuales, y donde dejas a todas las demás letras?

[14] Interviewee 4 is a Bisexual woman, working for an autonomous collective (F) of women working with reproductive rights, but she has been involved in different spaces of activists working for non-heterosexual women.

[15] [Hablando de espacios dentro de la ONG] Para hombres no, ya tienes muchos espacios están en todos lados y son la cara del discurso LGBT.

[16] Interviewee 2 is a person who identifies themselves as lesbian and at the same time as non-binary person. They work for NGO J, which is advocated to non-heterosexual women, interviewee 2 is in charge of PR and communication.

developing their agendas. For instance, class differences came up regularly from my participants, showing that the key aims of LGBTQ movements are not equally relevant to all members. In particular, the issue of same-sex marriage is considered as a matter focused especially on gay men that belong to the middle and upper classes, who own properties.

> "Equal marriage is more of a gay agenda, for gays who have money and were worried about inheriting, I do not say that there are not married women, but it is more their [gay's men] agenda" (Interviewee 5)[17]

Consequently, the most visible matter of the LGBTQ community does not seem to be important on the same level for all the identities inside the movement, and specifically from the point of view of lesbians and bisexual women, whose most prominent agenda is sexual health focused on their bodies and women who have sex with women. In addition, intersectionality is crucial on this point, because even the necessities of gay men vary depending on their class and ethnicity.

> "Men… it is not that it is easier for them, their process is different, it is not the same to be a gay man in *La vista* [upper-class neighbourhood] as to be one who lives in *Agua Santa* [working-class neighbourhood]." [18] (Interviewee 3[19])

Thus, the same-sex marriage agenda belongs to a specific group, becoming a priority over other matters, while it only benefits one part of the LGBTQ community. Second, in the same way, as same-sex marriage is a specific agenda, the hypervisibilisation of HIV also only belongs to gay men and trans women, who are considered high-risk groups, while bisexual women and lesbians are not the focus of the agenda of HIV and AIDS. As one of the participants mentioned,

[17] El matrimonio igualitario es una agenda más gay que tienen dinero y les preocupé heredar, no digo que no haya mujeres casadas, pero es más una agenda de ellos.

[18] Los hombres no es que sea más fácil su proceso es diferente, no es lo mismo ser un gay de "la vista" que uno que vive en "Agua santa".

[19] Interviewee 3 is a lesbian working in NGO K, which works with population on risk of HIV/AIDS outside of Mexico city, she is in charge of administrative stuff, as well as doing HIV tests.

> "The workshop for lesbians was similar to prevention of sexually transmitted diseases [...] they were made for different populations, heterosexuals, young people and lesbians and bisexual women, because the majority of the times women are not considered as a population at risk of getting HIV or other STIs."[20] (Interviewee 13[21])

Thus, gay men are in general more visible and they have more spaces, referring to physical spaces, as well as access to resources and interest of sponsors in their agendas, leaving all the other letters of the acronym with fewer opportunities and in a circumstance of inequality.

Trans women

The identity that follows within the hierarchy is trans women. Even though their movement is considered newer than the lesbian and gay movement, it has gathered force and nowadays is seen within the LGBTQ Mexican community as the second most visible, according to the data. As numerous participants expressed, trans women tend to be better represented and more active in the LGBTQ movement than lesbians and bisexual women.

> "I could even tell you that in the protest can be seen very well [the hierarchy], it's them [gay men], if not the trans [women] and bisexual women and lesbians, and then the trans guys. And those who are shown in the magazines and on the front pages of the newspapers, are gays and trans women who kiss each other, and it shows that it is a gender issue that is embedded in us."[22] (Interviewee 19[23])

[20] El taller para mujeres lesbianas igual era de prevención de enfermedades de transmisión sexual [...] se hicieron para diferentes poblaciones, heterosexuales, jóvenes y mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales, porque en muchos casos no se han considerado a las mujeres con población en riesgo de contraer VIH u otras ITS.

[21] Interviewee 13 is a blind bisexual woman on charge of an NGO (A) working with HIV/aids population, she has been working for that NGO for more than 13 years, is one of the oldest NGOs advocated to LGBTQ matters.

[22] Hasta te podría decir que en la marcha se puede ver muy bien, están ellos (hombres gay), si no las chicas Trans y las lesbianas bisexuales y lesbianas y después los chicos Trans. Y a quienes sacan en las revistas y en las portadas de los periódicos es a los gays y a las chicas Trans que se dan un beso. Y se nota que es un tema a de género que nos atraviesa.

[23] Interviewee 19 is a lesbian woman, who is the CEO of NGO C, which is seeking spaces for lesbians and bisexual women. She has worked for different gender and LGBTQ NGOs.

> "And in the protest, there were a lot of men, trans women and transvestites, there were hardly any lesbians, they were few." [24] (Interviewee 17[25])

> "And I see how people fighting for LGBT rights are solely gay men or trans women." (Interviewee 4)[26]

Despite the latest addition and legitimation of trans as part of the LGBTQ movement and their spaces, my interviews with lesbians and bisexual women within the movement indicate that the trans women's movement is more powerful and very visible in comparison to other identities such as lesbian, bisexual (women and men) and trans men. Two reasons are behind this: first, and the most noticeable, is the relationship that exists between trans women and HIV. They are the group considered to be most at risk and are prioritised on the same level as gay men, having an agenda that is taken more seriously by private and public donors, as one participant pointed out making echo of what some participants said:

> "We currently have a project called 'Raise Your Voice', which is aimed at gay men and men who have sex with other men, as well as transsexual women." (Interviewee 13)[27]

Thus, all the hypervisibilisation of HIV (De la Dehesa, 2010; Lind, 2010) permeates trans women's groups, which likewise leads to trans women being prioritised targets for sponsors and consequently considered in the agendas of LGBTQ NGOs. As this interviewee expressed,

> "I think that if you have to reflect a lot: why there are trans women and not lesbians and bisexual women? I think you have to reflect upon it a lot, we have to have a dialogue with the trans women and understand what is going on. Because, as we can see, it is

[24] Y en la marcha era una gran cantidad de hombre, mujeres Trans y travestis, no se veía casi mujeres lesbianas, era muy chiquito.
[25] Interviewee 17 is the CEO of NGO J, he is a trans man, and his NGO is advocated to issues of non-heterosexual women, they are trans and non-binary inclusive.
[26] Y es que yo veo como la gente luchadora por los derechos LGBT son puros hombres gay o mujeres Trans.
[27] Actualmente tenemos un proyecto que se llama "alza la voz", que va orientado hacia hombres gay y hombres que tienen sexo con otros hombres y mujeres transexuales.

> obvious that they have more privileges than a lesbian and a bisexual woman." [28] (Interviewee 12[29])

The second reason that 'elevates' the position of trans women within the LGBTQ hierarchy is related to the fact that the majority of trans women, especially in countries such as Mexico, were raised to conform to masculine gender roles. While this is a source of distress for many trans women, this early childhood socialisation potentially affects gender performances and the accruement of relevant gendered skills (such as public speaking, leadership etc.) later on as the construction of gender, in Butler's (2011) terms, is something that is embedded in social relations. Therefore, through early childhood socialisation, it is feasible that trans women have been more likely to develop skill sets more appropriate to politics and activism, given that many of them will have received a gendered education in which they are more prepared for public spheres.

Indeed, gendered education in Mexico works as a good example of how schooling leads to developing different characteristics in adulthood. First, Villanueva (1997) affirms that gender differences are a central aspect of the construction of the identity of children between 3-5 years old in Mexico. Similarly, Diller et al. (1996) state that there is a systematic entrenchment of sex roles in socialisation processes during childhood. Consequently, gender stereotypes are reinforced (Diller, et al., 1996). In addition to this, access to education has been gender distinguished historically, and boys have had more access to education than girls in Mexico (Pedrizini Villarreal and Parker, 2000), as in most other countries across the world. Thus, access to education could work as an example of how those bodies socialised as men are more able to engage in the public realm of work and politics, because "The boundaries of the body are the lived experiences of differentiation, where the differentiation is never neutral to the question

[28] Creo que si hay que reflexionar mucho porque si hay Trans y no mujeres lesbianas bisexuales. creo que hay que reflexionar un montón hablar con lo Trans y ver que pedo con ello, digo que evidentemente tienen más privilegios que una mujer lesbiana y una mujer bisexual.

[29] Interviewee 12 is a Lesbian CEO of NGO E, she has been on the scene of LGBTQ realm outside of Mexico City, and now is working in helping informing lesbians in a state of Mexico with different activities and programs to generate community.

of the gender difference or the heterosexual matrix" (Butler, 2011, p. 65). In other words, while no doubt facing multiple discriminations and negative consequences related to being trans and being forced to grow up in a 'boy's' body, it is feasible that many trans women within the LGBTQ movement reap some educational benefits from having been brought up as a boy before their gender transition. As this interviewee expressed,

> "It is very difficult to talk about trans women because, on the one hand, they lost many privileges, but on the other hand, they have different empowerment education." (Interviewee 12)[30]

Therefore, the way in which trans women's communities have entered and interacted within the LGBTQ movement and NGOs is embedded in gender dynamics that are related to patriarchal behaviours and patterns which overlap in a phallocentric view of sexuality (Amstrong, 1995). Hence, the visibilisation of trans women over other trans (masculine) identities, non-binary identities and other women (lesbian and bisexual) is based on phallocentric structures that permeate heteropatriarchy. This is because despite that trans women are performing femininity and trans men are performing masculinity, trans women usually performed cis-masculinity to some extent at some point of their lives, where early socialisation and gendered expectations prepared them to better manage themselves in spaces (as public sphere) that are thought as masculine. In relation to trans men, access to the benefits of masculine performances is inhibited after transitioning because trans men are more likely to perform non hegemonic masculinities, as I will explore and analyse later in this chapter**.** In addition, the HIV/AIDS crisis also visibilises trans women's bodies over bodies that are not considered at risk. In consequence, it leads to the invisibilisation and segregation of specific groups,

[30] Es muy complejo hablar de las mujeres Trans porque por un lado si perdieron muchos privilegios, pero por otro lado alguna tiene educación de empoderamiento distinta.

such as lesbians (Pecheny and De la Dehesa, 2011) that have been fighting for their rights since the beginning of the diversity movement (Mogrovejo, 2000; Fuentes Ponce, 2015).

Lesbians

The beginning of the movement for sexual diversity used to be more binary; in fact, it was called the "lesbian and gay movement" to refer in general to all the movement, and despite there were BTQ identities inside they were not totally recognised. For instance, in the area of academia it was also considered 'lesbian and gay studies' (Jagose, 1996; Hall et al.,2013). However, as mentioned before, gay men usually have more access to the advocacy spaces, agendas and research in this topic, as well as other identities such as trans women have overtaken the visibility of lesbians, and they are conscious of it.

> "Rather, we lesbians are the ones who have strived to make visible. Almost nobody recognises that lesbians have worked in the movement, but lesbians have always been there, we have always worked intensely." (Interviewee 5)[31]

Hence, lesbians have, for a long time, been both represented in the name and involved in fighting for rights. However, they have not been considered in different stages of the movement. For example, three Mexican lesbian activists, Nancy Cardenas, Yan Maria Castro and Patria Jimenez (who later was a congressional representative), have been fighting and lobbying since the beginning of the LGBTQ movement in the 70s in Mexico, yet they have been largely ignored by the wider movement (Fuentes Ponce, 2015). Despite their efforts to visibilise the lesbian movement, they were and still are less recognised in comparison to gay activists in those days and nowadays. This is related to gender

[31] Más bien las lesbianas somos las que nos hemos esforzado en visibilizar. Casi nadie reconoce que las lesbianas han trabajado en el movimiento, pero las lesbianas siempre hemos estado ahí siempre hemos trabajado un chingo.

disadvantages: NGOs of sexual diversity are not automatically feminist or conscious about the inequalities of gender (Acker, 1990).

Consequently, lesbians within LGBTQ NGOs have more obstacles to accessing advocacy spaces to be more visible and to have an agenda of their own (Valencia Toledano and Romero Hernandez, 2017). For instance, when LGBTQ NGO A was created, the group of lesbians that built it decided to state in the code of practices that the majority of the staff working and participating in the NGO must be women, to give this group more opportunities internally within the group. As one of them said,

> "The majority of the organisations are dominated by men when they are mixed, and also that most of the organisations were preferably gay organisations. So we wanted to avoid reproducing in our organisation the dominance that was in the movement of the gay identity over the other identities, that's why the statutes of the creation of the organisation were established that it should have a greater number of women." [32] (Interviewee 10[33])

Therefore, it is clear that lesbians need to create spaces, such as their own organisations, given that the spaces that are mixed tend to be dominated by gay men. In this same NGO (A), it is both interesting and important to note that the most visible collaborator is a gay man; he the only one.

> "Ignacio who is in charge of advocacy and management, he is responsible for going to meetings, precisely participation in international spaces, everything related to being a spokesperson of the organisation." (Interviewee 18[34])[35]

[32] Como la mayoría de las organizaciones están dominadas por los hombres cuando son mixtas y qué y también que la mayor parte de las organizaciones que había en ese momento eran organizaciones Gays preferentemente. Entonces nosotras queríamos evitar el que ese dominio que había en el movimiento de la identidad gay sobre las otras identidades se reprodujeran en nuestra organización, por eso fue que los estatutos de la creación de la organización se establecieron qué tendría que haber un mayor número de mujeres.

[33] Participant 10 is a lesbian academic woman, she is the CEO of one of the oldest organisations (A), she is a recognised academic and activist in Mexico City.

[34] Interviewee 18 is a lesbian, she works for NGO A, she oversees all the administrative stuff.

[35] Ignacio que es el encargado de incidencia y gestión él se encarga de ir a reuniones, de precisamente participación en espacio internacionales, todo es que tiene que ver con la vocería de la organización.

Similarly in LGBTQ NGO J, which is almost entirely dedicated to lesbians' and bisexual women's advocacy, the public representation is also undertaken by a man.

> "I realised that when she sent us to events related to the government, she never said that I was going as her representative, but when Andrés went, she said that Dr Andrés went in her place."[36] (Interviewee 6[37])

Thus, in LGBTQ NGOs if they are mixed and they are trying to open a space for lesbians, or if they are almost only for lesbians, when there is a man in the space (organisation), according to my data, he will be the most visible. In addition, the presence of non-heterosexual men (bisexual, gay or queer) in organisations advocated more to women's issues, implies more prestige among the LGBTQ community, because there is a negative connotation to separatist organisations (related to feminism). As this participant mentioned implicitly:

> "So when I decided, I said: I'm not going to stop carrying this group because it is open, wide and it has always been inclusive. In fact, there was a time when there were also men, gay men who came to the groups on Sunday and it was the women who asked them to leave and I was very sorry, men got angry and left. And I still think that in the end it is okay for women to have exclusive spaces, and even though Andrés, who is considered non-binary and pansexual, is the part of the group with XY chromosomes" (Interviewee 17)[38]

[36] Me daba cuenta que cuando nos enviaba a eventos que tenía que ver con el gobierno nunca decía que yo iba en lugar de ella, pero cuando iba Andrés si decía va el Dr. Andrés.

[37] Interviewee 6 is a Dr in psychology, she identifies herself as a lesbian, but many years he identified as a bisexual woman. She has been working for different NGOs such as A, D and J, but nowadays she works as a support psychologist in the call centre of the NGO H.

[38] Entonces, cuando decidí, dije: No voy a dejar de llevar a este grupo porque es abierto, amplio y siempre ha sido inclusivo. De hecho, hubo un momento en que también hubo hombres, hombres gay que vinieron a los grupos el domingo y fueron las mujeres quienes les pidieron que se fueran y yo lo lamenté mucho, los hombres se enojaron y se fueron. Y sigo pensando que al final sí está bien que las mujeres tengan espacios exclusivos, y aunque Andrés, que se considera no binario y pansexual, es la parte del grupo con cromosomas XY.

In a society, in which anything related to masculinity (or men) is privileged it is not that surprising that within LGBTQ NGOs with men working there, they have more prestige or they are in a higher position in the hierarchy than the ones that are only of lesbians and/or bisexual women.

Another existing phenomenon that emerged from my data, which shapes the hierarchy within the LGBTQ arena, is the romanticisation of labour. This means that work is understood as an act of love (Held, 2002; Nelson and England, 2002; Ungerson, 1997a) especially in the third sector (Little, 1997; Neysmith and Reitsma-Street, 2000); NGOs advocated to human rights are working for others, and this specific kind of job of taking care of others has the status of an act of love in Western societies (Davis, 2002), and bringing love into the market results in a two-sided problem. First, feminists from the Marxism school challenge working or selling caring/love abilities (Ungerson, 1997b); there is also the Weberian perspective of work as alienating (Badgett and Folbre, 2001) because people selling part of themselves is considered exploitation and alienating (Nelson and England, 2002). This is noticeable in the NGOs that I explored and from which I gathered my data, showing that lesbians and bisexual women in Mexico working or involved in LGBTQ activism feel pressure of selling services, becoming 'bad women activists', as this participant expressed:

> "The truth is that of defending human rights and not receiving money, it is an idea that comes from privilege and romanticisation of precariousness." (Interviewee 5)[39]

Besides this idea of exploitation, gender plays an important role, given that women are related "naturally" to caring activities because of the gendered division of work (Ungerson, 1997a; Becker, 1985) and generosity related to love is also considered a feminine characteristic (Aslaksen, 2002). Therefore, the work of women is considered as something related to generosity and volunteering (Hardill and Baines, 2003), as an act of love, not a job that should be paid. Consequently, society has

[39] La verdad eso de hacer defensa de derechos humanos y no recibir dinero, es una idea como desde el privilegio y la romantización de la precariedad.

different expectations of what women should do, how much they should work and how much their work costs in comparison to their counterpart men, who are considered socially as more selfish by nature (Aslaksen, 2002) and more suitable for doing the "real" (paid) work (Hardill and Baines, 2003), which takes for granted or trivialises women's work. For example, in the LGBTQ NGO H, which is one of the most visible NGOs in Mexico nowadays, there is only one woman and she does not have a proper salary. As the CEO of one of the NGOs with more access to resources commented:

> "In the legal constitution we are 3 (I, CEO), our president and the other person, who is part-time but does not receive a salary, is Valeria, who is our manager of the California region, also for creative projects and the coordinator of the NGO in Latin America for the United States and this position receives a symbolic remuneration." (Interviewee 1[40])[41]

Moreover, my data, corroborating the wider literature (Sen, 2013; Loutfi, 2001; Robinson, 2001), demonstrates that women have to work more to have the same opportunities and they dedicate more time to specific tasks, as the 'glass ceiling' theory states (Purcell, MacArthur and Samblanet, 2010). For example, in the case of the LGBTQ NGO K which is dedicated more to AIDS and HIV outside of Mexico City, the lesbian working there is conscious of her disadvantages as a lesbian involved in an NGO dedicated to topics that are not her specific agenda.

> "If I am the only one who has to solve everything in the office, I can't do something extra. That is, we [women] cannot do everything. No, it is not that there is a power relationship between my comrades and boss, and me. Although, the issue of women is a topic that does not interest them, so they do nothing [...] There is a demand on women

[40] Interviewee 1 is a gay man working as CEO of one of the most visible and with most funding LGBTQ NGO in Mexico (NGO H).

[41] En la constitución legal somos 3 (yo director ejecutivo) Raúl Dominguez que es nuestro presidente y la otra persona que está de medio tiempo, pero no recibe sueldo es Valeria, que es nuestra gerente de región californias, también para proyectos creativos y la coordinadora de la ONG en Latinoamérica para Estados Unidos. Esta posición recibe una remuneración simbólica.

> activists of how much we should work, that we have to always be for the others, that emotionally we have to take charge of the others." (Interviewee 3)[42]

Thus, they have internalised and embedded in social norms and ethics, that they have to be available for others (Neysmith and Reitsma-Street, 2000; Ungerson, 1997a), or in other cases, that they should get used to working without payment. As Held (2002) states, "Women have a vast amount of experience in not being paid for all or much of the work they do" (p. 20). Several participants expressed that during their careers as activists advocating for lesbians' and bisexual women's rights, they have been judged by other activists because they are looking for just payment and labour rights. First, this is related in general to the activist organisations.

> "Because when I get to these organisations I buy the idea of 'What is done here is done for love' But at that time I thought it was good to help the lesbian and bisexual community, how beautiful." (Interviewee 6)[43]

> "Women were educated for that, to work and not receive. And it's not as though I'm getting rich, but I have to pay rent. And I like my job as an advocate for lesbians' rights." (Interviewee 5)[44]

Thus, at first, activists believe that is in some ways acceptable not to be paid for their job; however, over time they notice that it is not just, despite the debates about ethics of selling love/care work, as this participant expressed, making echo of other participants' thoughts.

[42] Si yo soy la única que tengo que trabajar todo no es posible que haga algo por ahí. O sea, no podemos hacer todo. No, sino que haya una relación de poder con mis compañeros y jefe, si bien el tema de mujeres nos es un tema que les interese, pues no hacen nada [...] hay una exigencia a las defensoras feministas de cuánto deben trabajar, que tienes que estar siempre para las demás, que emocionalmente tienes que hacerte cargo de las demás.

[43] Porque cuando llego a estas organizaciones compro la idea de "lo que se hace aquí se hace por amor" Pero en ese momento pensé bueno ayudar a la comunidad de lesbianas y bisexuales, qué bonito

[44] Las mujeres fuimos educadas para eso, para trabajar y no recibir un peso. Y no es que yo me esté haciendo rica, pero yo pago renta. Y o sea me gusta mi trabajo de defensora de derechos de mujeres lesbianas.

> "It is important that you understand the difference between profits, which is to charge more, and the fact that I am not going to give away my work; work costs." (Interviewee 17)[45]

The rise of consciousness opens the discussion about the ethics of love and care, in which to sell caring activities is seen as exploitation, and at the same time caring functions are seen as an obligation for women (Nelson and England, 2002). Thus, both views on caring activities are entwined, showing that the differences between the feminist and Marxist position can vary depending on whether women are working for public or private organisations. However, in line with Nelson and England (2002) as well as my interviewees, it is necessary to understand that the unequal power relations cuts across all areas of life, not only in the market. Besides, access to the market and money is related to the entrance to the public sphere of women (Little, 1997) allowing more visibility. Finally, all these ethics about love and caring are gendered. Consequently, the ethics of selling caring activities is a debate that only focuses on women, while men are not morally judged for selling services (pink market/economy), as is discussed in-depth in the following chapter.

It is important to highlight that all these matters – related to the disadvantages of gender in this hierarchy of sexual diversity – have combined to ensure that the lesbian movement is disadvantaged, making it difficult to achieve the same level of visibility and relevance as gay men and trans women in the political arena. Two matters reveal these differences clearly and are interwoven, as an interviewee emphasises:

> "And I told them that, yes we had to think about the health of lesbians, but what we really had to do was strengthen the lesbian movement [...] The lesbian collectives are the ones that cannot last. What we saw is that lesbians who work in LGBT or feminist

[45] Es importante que se entienda la diferencia entre lucrar, que es cobrar de más, a que no voy a regalar mi trabajo, el trabajo cuesta. Y todo tiene un costo.

> organisations, well, their organisations last, but they were not the owner and lesbians could not put forward their agenda."[46] (Interviewee 11[47])

First, lesbians do not have access to sexual health information. This, in part, is because sexual rights have been considered as reproductive rights, and lesbians are not considered reproductive bodies (Lind, 2009). Therefore, they are left outside the topic of sexual rights. This argument is supported by some of the participants:

> "I would like to bring up the topic with Francisco, who is the CEO, about sexual health projects for women because we are a minority, I see that women in social action are fewer, there are more gay men than women within the NGO." [48] (Interviewee 16[49])

> "At the time, they (CENSIDA) funded the project for lesbians and bisexual women, but not anymore because they are a vulnerable but non-key population. Regarding women, they fund women in pregnancy or with HIV." (Interviewee 13)[50]

Thus, lesbians are not considered part of the agenda of sexual rights, which is one of the most obvious and visibilised agendas of international development and LGBTQ NGOs, as mentioned before with HIV/AIDS. This leads to the next point, that lesbians and bisexual women work on other agendas, ones that are not their own, given that there is no agenda for lesbians, thereby creating a cycle of continued invisibility.

> "I am comfortable working with HIV testing; I have been working with this for many years. I would like to work with women [...] the truth is that there are not many or it is very difficult to reach them because they work with LGBT issues. And by 'LGBT issues'

[46] Y yo les decía que, sí teníamos que pensar en la salud de las mujeres lesbianas, pero lo que realmente teníamos que hacer era fortalecer el movimiento lésbico [...] Las colectivas lésbicas son las que no aguantan. Lo que vimos es que las lesbianas que trabajan en organizaciones LGBT o feministas pues sus organizaciones aguantan, pero no eran suyas y no podían meter a la agenda lésbica.

[47] Participant 11 is a lesbian; she is the ex-CEO of the most important NGO of lesbians (D).

[48] A mí sí me gustaría tocar con Francisco qué es el director, el tema de proyectos de la salud sexual de mujeres porque somos minoría, inclusive veo que las mujeres en temas de acción social son más hombres gays qué mujeres dentro de la ONG.

[49] Participant 16 is a lesbian, she works for NGO L, she is convenor of some of the programmes.

[50] En su momento ellos (CENSIDA) nos financiaron el de mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales, porque es una población vulnerable no clave. a mujeres financian mujeres en el embarazo o con VIH.

> understand gay and the issue of HIV which is what the majority are dedicated to; or sexual and reproductive rights that have to do with Legal Abortion that works with heterosexual women". (Interviewee 3)[51]

However, it is important to highlight that the agendas which are only focused on issues that concern lesbians and bisexual women, are not well received by the LGBTQ community.

> "The demand for why the organisation was formed had to do precisely with the criticism that was made towards us, that we were interested only in working with lesbians and we were not contributing to the LGBT movement" (Interviewee 10)[52]

In this specific case this NGO (NGO A), was created as a result of political pressure from congressmen to the CEO – who was a congresswoman – demanding the inclusion of men's issues, which resulted in an association that addresses sexuality issues independently of gender. However, NGO A prioritises issues related to non-heterosexual women. Therefore, this association gains more traction in visibility in international spaces and appealing for sponsors, because it is not exclusive to women, given that separatism became unpopular a few decades ago (Jennings, 2018; Rudy, 2001), and nowadays exclusive spaces for women are stigmatised as radical. In addition to the pressure of political groups as well as the LGBTQ community, donors also have a preference for funding topics that are LGBTQ inclusive, meaning that these agendas have to encompass men's issues.

> "This year we pitched a big project to other institutions that fund LGBTI projects and they told us that they would not fund us because we do not work with men." (Interviewee 5)[53]

[51] Yo me siento cómoda trabajan haciendo pruebas de VIH, muchos años me he dedicado a esto, sí me gustaría trabajar con mujeres [...] la verdad es que no hay muchas o es muy complicado llegar a ellas porque trabajan tema LGBT y por tema LGBT entiéndase gay y el tema del VIH que es a lo que se dedica la mayoría o derechos sexuales y reproductivos que tiene que ver con Interrupción Legal del Embarazo que trabaja con mujeres heterosexuales.

[52] La demanda de porqué se formó la fundación tuvo que ver precisamente con la crítica que se hacía que a nosotros nos interesaba sólo el trabajo con las mujeres lesbianas y no aportábamos al movimiento LGBT.

[53] Este año metimos un gran proyecto a otras instituciones que financian proyectos LGBTI y nos dijeron que no nos iban a financiar porque no trabajamos con hombres.

Hence, lesbians struggle to visibilise their agendas and to work only for themselves. I consider that their identity as political lesbian is a good illustration. There is a tendency among lesbian activist women to affirm that being a lesbian is not only related to their sexual and romantic attraction to other women but also acknowledge their identities as something political instead of romantic (Rich, 1980; Jeffreys, 1990; Wittig, 1992; Lorde, 2007).

> "I told her that it was not a behavioural matter, but an identity and I identify myself as a lesbian." (Interviewee 11)[54]

> "I like my work as an advocate, my job is to be a lesbian, that's my job. I'm a lesbian who works with lesbians, for lesbians." (Interviewee 5)[55]

> "But we can say that I have a political definition of lesbian." (Interviewee 10)[56]

A specific case is Interviewee 2 who claims that her identity as a lesbian is more political than romantic, but in a different way to the others; she identifies herself more as a non-binary person, which disrupts the gender logic central to lesbianism.

> "I could identify myself more as a non-binary person; however in the political struggle it seems more necessary to be on the side of lesbians; it is where more work is needed, more visibility." (Interviewee 2)[57]

Part of how some participants affirmed their lesbian identity has different connotations. On one side, "lesbian" as an identity seems to be more intelligible to be used within the political movement in comparison to other dissident identities, such as non-binary persons. On the other side, "lesbian" as a word tends to be more linked to the social meaning– which has negative connotations – than to the

[54] Pero yo le decía que no era una onda de conducta, sino una identidad y yo me identifico como lesbiana.
[55] Me gusta mi trabajo de defensora, mi trabajo es ser lesbiana, ese es mi trabajo soy una lesbiana que trabaja con lesbianas por lesbianas.
[56] Pero podemos decir que tengo una definición política de lesbiana.
[57] Yo podría identificarme más como persona no binaria, sin embargo, en la lucha me parece necesario estar del lado de las lesbianas, es donde se necesita más trabajo, más visibilidad.

semantic/dictionary meaning. To put it in another way, lesbian has more to do with gender expression than with sexual orientation, lesbian is related with tomboyism, so lesbians are persons who are not women, but either men, as Halberstam (1998) explains that tomboyism is not accepted when is closely related to male identification. Thus, some of the participants mentioned how they prefer to avoid the use of 'lesbian'.

> "I came out of the closet in my house, but as the statistics say that lesbians are more discriminated against than homosexuals I said, 'I am homosexual' [laughs]." (Interviewee 5)[58]

However, in the specific context of political movement, lesbians highlight the importance of using the word lesbian to visibilise their identity within the LGBTQ arena, stepping outside of the gay (men) identity. As participant 17 stated.

> "We started talking with other lesbian groups and they said that why we used the term gay women, that it was an Anglicism and that it made women (lesbians) invisible." (Interviewee 17)[59]

Therefore, lesbian identity is important for lesbians within the LGBTQ movement, because it provides a feeling of belonging, and has a relationship with the appropriation of spaces symbolically and physically. On one side, lesbian identity helps to strengthen the lesbian movement because historically it has been better received within the LGBTQ community than that of bisexual women, which is the next category in the hierarchy of LGBTQ movement in Mexico.

[58] Yo Salí del closet en mi casa, pero como las estadísticas dicen que se discrimina más a las lesbianas que a los homosexuales yo dije "soy homosexual" (ríe).

[59] Empezamos a hablar con otros grupos de lesbianas y decían que por qué usábamos el término mujeres gais, que era un anglicismo y que invisibilizaba las mujeres (lesbianas).

Bisexual people[60]

Bisexual people, according to my interview data, experience being almost at the bottom of the hierarchy of the LGBTQ community as activists and specifically in NGOs. Their marginalisation is related not only to discrimination, as in other cases. Rather their discriminations are weighted in norms of sexual practices, invisibilisation and also gender norms. Consequently, bisexuality has been an identity that seems more obscured historically (Yoshino, 2000; Baker, Richards and Bowes-Catton, 2009) than homosexuality. In the specific case of the Mexican LGBTQ arena, bisexual people are something unknown or strange, as a couple of activists affirm:

> "A transsexual friend was the one who told me, 'I think you are bisexual, dude' and I was like, 'What is that?' I ran to the internet and I remember that what appeared was pure porn when I looked for what was 'bisexual', but with the definition I understood." (Interviewee 6)[61]

This quote refers to the lack of knowledge about bisexuality as an identity. However, in addition to this, other activists agree with the unawareness of bisexuality within the LGBTQ realm, although bisexual people have been on the scene for many years.

> "At that time [90s] the term bisexual was not visible, although the work of Alfred Kinsey was clear, the word was not visible and there was no movement of bisexuality." (Interviewee 13)[62]

> "Bisexuals have always been relegated people, they do not exist, and they are considered people in transition, confused. In addition, there was no one who called her/himself as

[60] I refer to the experiences of bisexual people, however it is relevant to mention that I did not interview bisexual men, and all the experiences narrated here are experiences of lesbians and bisexual women, because gay men interviewed did not mentioned bisexuality.

[61] Una amiga transexual fue la que me dijo "creo que eres bisexual, wey" y yo así de "¿Qué es eso?" corrí al internet y me acuerdo que apareció puro porno, buscando lo que era bisexual, pero ya con la definición me quedó claro.

[62] En ese momento el término bisexual no se visibilizaba, aunque el trabajo de Alfred Kinsey era claro, pero no era visible la palabra y no había movimiento de bisexualidad.

> bisexual at that moment [...] and then at that time [80s] it was like bisexual didn't exist." (Interviewee 17)[63]

Hence, bisexual people have been relegated to invisibility historically, and they are not easily found in spaces of political activism (Udis-Kessler, 2013) because there is a lack of trust from the LGBTQ community in bisexuals as activists (Israel and Mohr, 2004). Thus, they are invisible and as a consequence, they do not have a political agenda, as one participant confirms:

> "Yes there are young bisexuals, but they have no political interest, they only have as a matter of reaffirmation of bisexuality." (Interviewee 6)[64]

Callis (2009) agrees with this statement, saying that the lack of legitimation of bisexuality in medical discourse made the entrance of bisexuality to the LGBTQ arena slower and later in comparison to lesbian and gay identities. This situation delayed the recognition of bisexuality as a sexual identity. Consequently, the legitimation of bisexuality as a valid identity is very complex to achieve in LGBTQ arena, as different activists expressed it in different ways. For example, Interviewee 10 expressed that she had a bisexual phase

> "Although I started, let's say, in the first phase defining myself as a bisexual, little by little, I was defining myself much more like a lesbian." (Interviewee 10)[65]

This understanding of her identification as bisexual shows that for this interviewee bisexuality is not considered a valid identity (Amstrong, 1995; Lingel, 2009; Weiss, 2004) but rather, just a phase. However, there are other activists who identify themselves as bisexuals and consider it valid, but they have received this lack of legitimation from others:

---

[63] Las bisexuales siempre han sido personas relegadas, no existen se consideran personas en transición, confundidas. Además, no había nadie que se autonombrara [...] y pues en ese tiempo (80's) era como que no existía.

[64] Si hay jóvenes bisexuales, pero no hay interés político, sólo como una onda de reafirmación de la bisexualidad.

[65] A pesar de que yo empecé, vamos a decir, en la primera fase que fue una definición bisexual, poco a poco fui aventándome mucho más como una mujer lesbiana y fue orientando identificarme como lesbiana.

> "I am a bisexual feminist with everything that implies for me and for other people [...] I feel that bisexual women are still described as what we are not, I refer to: we do not describe ourselves as a phase or that we do not know what we want."[66] (Interviewee 14[67])

> "Many [lesbian feminists] told me, 'It is a stage after you leave the closet, afterwards you are going to realise that you do not like men, that you only like women.'" (Interviewee 4)[68]

In addition to the lack of legitimation, moral norms regarding sexual practices play a role in the subordination of bisexuality within the LGBTQ hierarchy in Mexico. The fact that bisexual people decide to establish sexual and/or romantic relationships with men and women is subjected to moral judgments (Jeffreys, 1999; Rust, 2000). This is related to the fact that monosexuality – attraction to just one gender – is valued more positively within heteronormative and homonormative societies because it helps to promote monogamy – which is also valued in heteronormative systems, as Rubin (1984) shows in her stratification of sexual practices in western society. However, obviously, bisexual people are not monosexual (Yoshino, 2000; Gammon and Isgro, 2006). One interviewee used the example of motherhood as a factor to invisibilise bisexual women.

> "Or for example, bisexuals who are mothers, their partners tell them that they already have to be straight, just because they are mothers." (Interviewee 14)[69]

This specific example permeates not only moral norms in general; it demonstrates that these moral norms are gendered, therefore the way of defining, legitimising and invisibilising bisexual people also changes because of gender. Similarly, as lesbians to gay men, bisexual women are related to bisexual

[66] Soy bisexual feminista con todo lo que implica para mí y para otras personas [...] siento que a las mujeres bisexuales se nos sigue describiendo como lo que no somos, o sea nosotras no nos describimos como que sea una fase, de que no sabemos lo que queremos.

[67] Interviewee 14 is bisexual woman, she is an autonomous activist nowadays, but she has been working for different NGOs, such as collective F and collaborating with NGO D and other government institutions.

[68] Muchas me dijeron es que es una etapa después de que sales del clóset después te vas a dar cuenta que no te gustan los hombres que a ti únicamente te gustan las mujeres.

[69] O por ejemplo las bisexuales que son madres, sus parejas les dicen que ya tiene que ser heterosexuales, solo por ser madres.

men; in other words, bisexual men also occupy the few organisations and associations for bisexual people, as two interviewees expressed.

> "I found a chat from a group called *BI option* [...] we went to the group for the first time. It did not make so much sense to me because it was full of very adult people. For me, at the time I was 20 years old and full of people like 50 to 40 years old, married and mostly men." (Interviewee 6)[70]

> "I also met the *BI option* [bisexual association], which I did not like very much its perspective because the one who gives the talks is a heterosexual man, what's with that, right?" (Interviewee 14)[71]

Despite there being 10 years difference between these two experiences, and while just two accounts are; thus, far from conclusive, it can be inferred that there has not been much progress on bisexual women occupying specific spaces for themselves in the LGBTQ Mexican arena. Besides this, bisexual men tend to be also more visible in some organisations, even when these organisations are dedicated primarily to women's matters. For example, NGO J, which was created only for women, has in the last couple of years been reoriented as queer which has opened the space for more identities other than those who identify as women, as the interview except below typifies:

> "The relationship with Andrés was very different, he arrived saying, 'I am Andrés and I am bisexual and that is why I come to this group' [...]. He started going on Sundays and I was very taken aback that Perla (the CEO) introduced him as a colleague when she never introduced me as a colleague, people knew that I worked there but as a volunteer and she introduced him as Dr Andrés, collaborator of NGO J." (Interviewee 6)[72]

[70] Encontré un chat de un grupo que se llamaba opción Bi [...] fuimos por primera vez al grupo. A mí no me hacía tanto sentido porque estaba llena de personas muy adultas para mí o sea que en ese momento yo tenía 20 años y estaba lleno de personas como es 50 a 40 años casadas y en su mayoría hombres.

[71] Conocí también a opción BI (asociación bisexual), que no me gustó mucho su perspectiva porque el que da las pláticas es un hombre heterosexual cómo es eso ¿no?

[72] La relación con Andrés si era muy diferente en extremo, él llegó diciendo soy Andrés y soy bisexual y por eso vengo a este grupo […]. Empezó a ir los domingos y me impresionó mucho que lo presentó como un colega, cuando a mí nunca me presentó como colega, la gente sabía que yo trabajaba ahí, pero como la voluntaria y lo presentó como el Dr. Andrés, colaborador de la ONG J.

Therefore, it is easier to recognise and accept bisexual men in LGBTQ NGOs, not only in the mixed NGOs but also in associations dedicated to women and bisexual people. This situation occurs although many men who have sex with men, even when they have sex with women, do not identify themselves as bisexual men (Jeffreys, 1999; Lingel, 2009). They prefer to assume the label of "men who have sex with men".

> "'Bisexual men' is not used much, that is, we know but we say, gay men and men who have sex with other men because they rarely recognise themselves as bisexual men." (Interviewee 13)[73]

Consequently, despite the lack of men who identify themselves as bisexual (Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell, 2009) and their sparse presence in the LGBTQ realm, they are more legitimised than bisexual women, considering that both have romantic and sexual relationships with other men and women. This is because bisexual men are discriminated due to homophobia and bisexual women are discriminated due to heteropatriarchy, as I developed in chapter two. Therefore, within LGBTQ spaces bisexual men are less recognised and discriminated but more legitimised than bisexual women, considering that LGBTQ spaces are less homophobic than in society in general, while those spaces remain shaped by patriarchy to some extent. This discrimination becomes more noticeable when bisexual women and lesbians work together, which is very common, given there is a trend among lesbians to reject bisexuals, (re)producing their invisibilisation in the LGBTQ arena.

> "It is an exclusive space for lesbians [NGO D]. And that's what I argued with Rosa because it's not that the experiences of bisexuals and trans women are not important. However, if you cannot concentrate on something... In other words, if we lesbians have

[73] Los hombres bisexuales, es algo que no se usa mucho o sea si conocemos, pero nosotros decimos hombres gay y hombres que tienen sexo con otros hombres porque casi no se reconocen como hombres bisexuales.

> something, it is that we have always worked for the rest of the social movements, for all of them [women]." (Interviewee 11)[74]

Therefore, the thought that bisexuals do not deserve to share the same space as lesbians is recurrent. It shows that there is a clear trend to exclude bisexual women from these organisations.

> "But bisexual women continue to be questioned; we continue to be discriminated against within the same LGBTQ community as [...] lesbians and they were aggressive to me for being bisexual." (Interviewee 14)[75]

This discrimination tends to be associated with two specific circumstances: because of their relationships with men and because of heterosexual passing. Both situations are about systems of oppression that lesbians consider are oppressing them universally. This statement is from an essentialist position, because lesbians separatists recognise men as a coherent group rooted in biological sex and serving to the patriarchal system, taking for granted that *all* men are oppressors and *all* women oppressed (sic). Thus, lesbian separatism as a feminist political position has an important role in the perception of bisexual women in the LGBTQ activism sphere (Lingel, 2009), as these interviewees narrate:

> "I move up in the feminist movement and I meet the radical feminists who tell me that my bisexual part is serving patriarchy because it continues to serve men." (Interviewee 4)[76]

[74] Es un espacio exclusivo para lesbianas. Y es lo discutía con Rosa, porque no es que no sea importante lo que viven las bisexuales, no es que no sea importante lo que viene las mujeres Trans, Pero de pronto si no puedes concentrarte en, o sea si algo tenemos las lesbianas es que siempre hemos trabajado para el resto de los movimientos sociales, para todas.

[75] Pero las mujeres bisexuales seguimos siendo cuestionadas, seguimos siendo discriminadas dentro de la misma comunidad LGBTQ [...] las lesbianas y me violentaban por ser bisexual.

[76] Y luego Con esto del feminismo y voy escalando y me encuentro con las feministas radicales que me dicen es que tu parte bisexual está sirviendo al patriarcado porque sigue sirviendo a los hombres.

> "I am bisexual (feminist) by decision, which is not random, I chose it, and I still question the fact that I continue having relationships with men." (Interviewee 14)[77]

Hence, one of the most common complains about bisexual women is their relationship with men, also related to their possibility of passing as heterosexuals, which is frowned upon by the lesbian community who say that bisexual women have access to privileges of heterosexual women which makes them politically less able to participate legitimately. In other words, they are seen as traitors, not standing up for women who express same-sex desire. As some participants explained:

> "It is a big problem because many things remain invisible [referring to bisexuality]. However, at the same time, I think – this is not what I say, it is what a theorist says – the problem of bisexuality is the heterosexual passing [...]
>
> [Speaking about a specific bisexual woman] in her work, she is heterosexual, only in LGBTQ spaces she says that is bisexual to establish a romantic relationship with a woman [...]
>
> And I remember a lot that this woman that I read about said that this happens with all bisexual women." (Interviewee 6)[78]

On one hand, Interviewee 6 agrees with the idea that having heterosexual relations is a privilege of bisexual women in comparison to the hindrances that lesbians have to face because they build relationships outside heteropatriarchal norms. On the other hand, bisexual activists do not find that having relationships with men gives them an advantage, as this interviewee shared:

[77] Soy bisexual (feminista) por decisión, que no es azaroso, yo lo elegí, y me sigo cuestionando el hecho de que me siga relacionando con hombres.

[78] Es un gran problema porque se quedan invisibles muchas cosas [refiriéndose a la bisexualidad]. Pero a la vez, creo que esto no lo digo yo
lo dice una teórica, el problema de la bisexualidad es el pase heterosexual [...] [hablando de una mujer bisexual específicamente] En su trabajo es heterosexual. Solo en los espacios LGBTQ dice que es bisexual, para establecer una relación afectiva con una mujer [...] Y recuerdo mucho que esta mujer que yo leí que decía que eso pasa con todas las mujeres bisexuales.

> "She [a lesbian feminist] said that bisexuals have the privilege of heterosexuality, and I thought those privileges do not exist, the only privileges are that we can hold hands in the street." (Interviewee 4)[79]

Actually, instead of giving privileges, heterosexual passing implies a rejection from one's community (Lingel, 2009), the lesbian feminist community. In addition, having relationships with men does not imply an advantage, because of the male privilege embedded in heterosexual relationships. As Bower (2013) affirms: "Heterosexual privilege cannot be divorced from male privilege, and male privilege never benefits women unambiguously. For women, heterosexual privilege is a double-edged sword" (p. 100). Thus, heterosexual passing does not give an advantage to bisexual women, because they have to deal with the burdens of heteronormativity and gender. This shows that heterosexual passing is also a gender matter, in which bisexual women are judged because they have heterosexual relationships while bisexual men tend to escape judgement from society in general outside of the LGBTQ arena, because of having sex with women (heterosexual passing) (Eliason, 2000), and because structurally heteropatriarchal societies, like Mexican, privilege men. Hence, heterosexual passing – for bisexual women – does not represent an advantage and instead represents a stigma to being recognised and accepted in lesbian spaces.

Moreover, it is important to say that not all lesbian feminists – who are activist in the LGBTQ movement – consider bisexuals as people with privileges and reject their identity (Udis-Kessler, 2013), which was supported by some lesbians who participated in this research, who critiqued how bisexual women are classified only in terms of their relationship with men, as this lesbian interviewee expressed:

> "The lesbian movement is very complex here in Mexico, it throws bisexual women out because it says that by relating to men they cannot help the revolution, so they could

[79] Ella decía que los bisexuales tienen el privilegio de la heterosexualidad yo pensaba esos privilegios no existen los únicos privilegios es que se puedan agarrar de la mano en la calle.

> not help. Which I find super aggressive because, in the end, it is to define women again because of their relationship with men." (Interviewee 5)[80]

Although Israel and Mohr (2004) argue that bisexual women are more accepted within gay spaces than lesbian spaces, the gathered data shows that bisexual women are not included and/or do not belong in LGBTQ spaces, which are more related to gay men and their agenda. One participant claimed that when she stopped identifying herself as bisexual, she felt more included in lesbian spaces, supporting the argument of exclusion.

> "[Since she considers herself as a lesbian] for the bi/LGBT spaces, they stopped taking me into account. [...] I think that, in feminist groups, I feel that if there is a difference, my position as a lesbian is more legitimated." (Interviewee 6)[81]

Some of the interviewees link this lack of recognition and spaces to a lack of agenda for them, because their identity overlaps with lesbian and gay identities (Yoshino, 2000), and consequently their agendas.

> "I believe that there are agendas for each letter and then more general agendas, but I believe that as bisexual women we need to go out more, let us talk about our needs." (Interviewee 14)[82]

Bisexual women have the feeling of a lack of agenda of their own but they also feel the responsibility to develop it, considering that they have also agency in making bisexuality a more visible identity, and this feeling is supported positively and negatively by lesbian community, as two different participants showed.

---

[80] El movimiento lésbico está muy complejo acá en México echa a las mujeres bisexuales, porque dice que al relacionarse con hombres no pueden ayudar a la revolución, entonces no podían ayudar. lo cual me parece súper violento porque al final es definir a las mujeres de nuevo por su relación que tienen con los hombres.

[81] [Desde que se nombra lesbiana] para las ONG bi ya me dejaron de tomar en cuenta. [...] Pienso que, en grupos feministas, siento que, si hay diferencia, es más legítima mi posición de lesbiana.

[82] Yo creo que hay agendas para cada letra y luego agendas más generales, pero yo creo que como mujeres bisexuales nos hace falta salir más, que hablemos de nuestras necesidades.

> "Regarding the bisexual agenda, I get the impression that in Spain it does exist and in the United States it exists but that here [Mexico] it does not exist." (Interviewee 6)[83]

> "…and once talking to an important lesbian activist in Mexico, she told me, 'I do not understand what are the needs of bisexual women.'" (Interviewee 4)[84]

Therefore, in comparison to lesbians, bisexual women have more issues of visibility and belonging in Mexico LGBTQ NGOs than lesbians. This is for two main reasons: first, the overlapping of agendas and spaces with lesbians, and second the discrimination faced regarding their relationship with men and heterosexual passing. Consequently, there is no bisexual movement in Mexico in terms of either spaces or an agenda for bisexual women.

Trans men and queer people

Finally, two identities are the least visible/recognised of all in the LGBTQ NGOs arena in Mexico are trans men and queer identities (non-binary and not fixed). From the 19 interviewees, only six mentioned queer identities and trans men. However, their comments were more related to the lack of information about these identities, as well as their feeling of being identities unwelcome in the NGOs. As this interviewee, a bisexual woman, expressed their lack of knowledge about these identities:

> "Once we were asked, what we were doing in our community [LGBTQ] and what were the most important matters; and I had to answer about trans people's rights, and I was like, 'What?' […] Because, to be honest, I do not know much about it [referring to anecdotes from 3 different cases about trans women and men] so I feel that we would have to re-educate ourselves more as human rights defenders." (Interviewee 4)[85]

[83] Siguiendo en la agenda bisexual me da la impresión que en España sí existe y en Estados Unidos existe pero que acá no existe.
[84] Y una vez hablando con una activista importante de las lesbianas de las maternidades lésbicas en México me dijo yo no entiendo Cuáles son las necesidades de las mujeres bisexuales
[85] Una vez nos preguntaron qué era lo que hacíamos nosotros en nuestra comunidad [LGBTQ] y cuál era la problemática; y por ejemplo a mí me tocó derechos de las personas Trans y yo me quedé con cara de ¿qué? [...] Porque en realidad, no sé mucho al

This is related to the idea of queer/non-binary as sexual identities that have just been coined within the LGBTQ arena in Mexico and the need to find and refer to more fluid ways to identify themselves.

> "Originally, the founders were women, but we know that sexuality is political, but it is also fluid and it is valid to flow within it. Therefore, over time, there have been modifications of identities within the organisation, most of us are women, but there are also non-binary, queer, trans queer, non-binary people. And these new identities surprise me as well, bisexual non-binary, pansexual non-binary." (Interviewee 2)[86]

> "Now I define myself more as a *genderqueer* person, I no longer define myself as a lesbian and now a little more as a trans person." (Interviewee 17)[87]

In addition to their self-recognition within these "new" identities, two participants that belong to the same NGO (NGO J), recognised that queer identities are emerging in Mexico and are changing the LGBTQ arena, which is making an effort to include them in their spaces.

> "The group has gone queer, which is the new term that has already overtaken the term 'gay'. Now we also talk about race and other intersections. In addition, we talk about polyamory and we have contact with the intersexual group, the asexual group." (Interviewee 17)[88]

Thus, it is possible to see how these new identities are just emerging as something innovative and at the same time something unknown, which provokes the rejection of queer and non-binary identities, this is seen when we notice that only NGO J think about new fluid identities. This is for a number of reasons. First, this is because the term "queer" does not have a translation in Spanish, reinforcing the

---

respecto [refiriendo anécdotas de 3 casos diferentes sobre mujeres y hombres Trans] entonces siento que sí tendríamos que reeducarnos más como defensores de derechos humanos.

[86] Originalmente las fundadoras son mujeres, pero sabemos que la sexualidad es política pero también es fluida y es válido fluir dentro de esta. Entonces con el paso del tiempo ha habido modificaciones de identidades dentro de la organización, la mayoría somos mujeres, pero también hay personas no binarias, queer, trans queer, no binarias. Estas nuevas identidades me sorprenden a mí también, no binarias bisexuales, no binarias pansexuales.

[87] Ahora me defino más como una persona *genderqueer*, ya no me defino como lesbiana y ahora un poquito más como una persona Trans.

[88] El grupo se ha ido queerizando, que es el nuevo termino que ya sobre paso a lo gay, además que hablamos de la raza, de las otras cosas que son intersecciones y que, si hay poliamor y tenemos contacto con el grupo intersexual, el grupo asexual

idea of this term as something foreign that does not have any socio-historical context in the region, so its meaning loses its radical weight (Rivas, 2011). Second, the fact that the term 'queer' comes from the US, and is therefore is (at the very least perceived as) imperialist (Mogrovejo, 2012), adds more aversion to accepting these identities, having resistance to their inclusion, not only linguistically, but also in spaces and reality. It is to say that the inclusion of queer identities in the LGBT arena in Mexico results complex because they do not feel that 'queer' belongs to the Mexican/Hispanic culture, similarly as Butler (2019) explains that gender as a term is not well inserted in context in which there is no translation for it, because it does not touch or represent the Mexican/Latin context.

Consequently, queer identities are not welcomed by many people who participate in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. First, Interviewee 6 said that an association where she used to volunteer became queer, as if it was something negative: "When I leave, everything became queer" (Interviewee 6)[89]. In addition, there is a refusal of non-binary identities and trans men, as this participant expressed:

> "Because all the people that I know who are non-binary, they get more upset if you use female pronouns to refer to them. In addition, they think that the expression of gender is clothing and then it is a super banal thing, or they have this speech of 'I wanted to free myself from oppression because I didn't want to be a woman' [...] and it seems to me that that, deep down, has a lot of misogyny." (Interviewee 5)[90]

This perception results in people who identify themselves as trans men, or non-binary at some point on the spectrum of non-hegemonic masculinity. For example, trans men that do not identify directly with masculinity (hegemonic masculinity) or gender fluid people that identify more with masculinity (pronouns/gender expression); they tend to be stigmatised by lesbians, specifically. This is related to the fact that trans masculinities are hierarchised higher in women's spaces (Noble, 2013), because

[89] Cuando yo me salgo todo se hace *queer*.

[90] Porque yo toda la banda que conozco que es no binaria les molesta más que les hables en femenino, y piensan que la expresión de género es la ropa y entonces es una cosa súper banal, o tienen este discurso de yo me quería liberar de la opresión porque pues no quería ser mujer […]y a mí me parece que eso en el fondo tiene mucha misoginia.

despite that their masculinity it is not hegemonic, masculinity in public spaces is privileged over femininity. Consequently, it is causing their rejection in women-exclusive spaces, as one interviewee relates about a young trans man:

> "I have a friend who is like a son to me, who is a trans man, and he told me that he had been dismissed from a lesbian NGO (D) the day he told them he was a trans man." (interviewee 17)[91]

Thus, for lesbian NGOs it presents a problem to accept these identities in their spaces, becoming a double-edged sword, because from one side, as we have seen throughout the chapter, men tend to be more legitimised within the LGBTQ movement, occupying spaces and agendas, and therefore lesbians are looking for their own recognition; while on the other side, lesbians are acting also as oppressors of other identities that are hierarchised in a lower position of legitimation and visibilisation (Hartman, 2006; Rudy, 2001).

Consequently, trans men and queer identities are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy; thus lesbians overlook the fact that these masculinities are created to some extent outside of the heteronormative structures, trying to challenge the patriarchal norm (Whittle, 2006). Therefore, their invisibilisation is greater and more obvious, because they cannot find spaces to develop their agenda and their performance of masculinity, given that trans masculinities tends to overlap with lesbian butch identities (Halberstam, 1998). Hence, trans men do not feel comfortable in spaces of lesbians and bisexual women, even though many experience issues that converge such as sexual health. However, their agenda is more related to the recognition of their identities in public spaces and access to health services, as well as the legalisation of their identities. Therefore, the reasons for their invisibilisation are linked to two specific matters: on one side that their bodies – similarly to lesbians and bisexual

[91] Tengo un hijo putativo, que es un hombre trans y me contó que lo habían corrido de la ONG D el día que les dijo que era un hombre trans.

women – are not at risk of HIV/AIDS or considered as reproductive bodies, therefore there is little interest from donors in funding their agendas; on the other side, their gender education in childhood is related to femininity, resulting in a different approach to masculinity which, as it is known, is subordinated due to its distance from the hegemonic standard. With this in mind, it is useful at this juncture to consider the ways in which masculine performativity is received in the NGOs that I researched. As such, the next section discusses how performativity of masculinity influences this hierarchy of non-normative identities within LGBTQ NGOs.

Performing masculinities in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico

In Mexico, as in the majority of westernised cultures, society is structured under gender norms that guide specific social conduct for each gender (masculinity and femininity), which is understood as inherent to those intelligible as men and women. Thus, all these gendered behaviours – gender identity – are embedded in culture. They are taught and learnt in different spheres of life since childhood, such as school, home and the media (Metcalf and Humphries, 1985). As a consequence, these social guidelines are reproduced in everyday life in all the spheres by society in general. These guidelines shape society, dividing the conduct of men and women as relational and in a hierarchical manner, in which masculine behaviours are privileged socially over feminine ones. The performativity of these is not a choice; as I mentioned before in chapter 2, they are at least temporarily fixed in culture, hence women (performing femininity) are oppressed culturally in relation to men (performing masculinity). One example of this conduct is the access to the public arena: historically women have been relegated to the domestic sphere and private space, and this has been justified on the grounds of their reproductive capacity and perceived obligations (Ortner, 1972). Therefore, above all, cis-gender men are more comfortable in political and activist spaces as they are legitimated as people that deserve to

inhabit those spaces. This is noticeable as the majority of CEOs and visible figures in LGBTQ organisations, as well as in the movement, tend to be gay men or – and this will be explored in more detail later – trans women (on the grounds that they were born into bodies perceived as biologically male). Consequently, men performing masculinity have more access to public spaces as part of the culture, and they easily flourish themselves in public spaces better than women performing femininity do.

Taking into account the data gathered for this research, the LGBTQ movement in Mexico has been permeated by gender regimes in society. As a consequence, it has generated and reproduced different opportunities and access to resources for different gender groups. On one side, people socialised as men and/or performing masculinity have more privileges and access to public spaces[92]. On the other side, people socialised as women and/or performing femininity have less access to public spaces. Therefore, the opportunities for lesbians, bisexual women and trans men, as well as non-binary identities that were socialised as women, are fewer in comparison to those for gay men and trans women who, at least in early childhood for the latter, were socialised as men.

The way in which the performance of masculinity affects the LGBTQ movement varies because it is performed by the different LGBTQ identities in different ways. First, gay men are the group with more opportunities, but this is related, in the first instance, to the hegemonic masculinity that they are encouraged to fulfil socially, which is also related to homonormativity. Given that gay men have more access to hegemonic/normative practices (Warner, 1991; Duncan, 2003; Moreno and Pichardo, 2006; Brown, 2009), for instance, they tend to have better economic opportunities (Bell, 1991; Alder and Brenner, 1992; Bell and Valentine, 1995). In addition, they have both socialisations as men and the

[92] In the case of transsexual men, they tend to have more embedded their feminine socialisation regarding their access to public spaces.

performance of masculinity, even if this is feminised at certain point. As one of the gay men interviewed said:

> "Since I arrived in Mexico City, I felt a constant pressure to prove that you are man enough to be successful, to be popular, to have a partner, etc." (Interviewee 1)[93]

Therefore, they also experience some pressure about how to perform masculinity in the different fields of achievement. Even though they are not heterosexual, there are strong pressures to fit the stereotype of what a man has to do, and not be too feminine. As another gay male participant affirmed about his identity at his job:

> "Being gay has given me an advantage and not only in activism but also for example in my work, I work in the construction sector, which is a very *machista*, very heteronormalised space."[94] (Interviewee 9[95])

Hence, there is a general feeling of gay men having to perform masculinity to some extent as part of heterosexist social conventions, the set of norms that they have to accomplish and were socialised into, which implies privilege and at the same time tends to invisibilise or place in a lower position other identities such as lesbians and bisexual women. This is a general feeling among the participants.

> "Because I feel that, the *machismo* is related to this [work among organisations] for example they [gay men] are the ones who speak more in NGOs, I have had to see uncomfortable things, such as their shutting up young people and women, the way they validate each other is notorious." (Interviewee 18)[96]

[93] Desde que llegué a la Ciudad de México era un constante probar que eres lo suficientemente hombre para ser exitoso, para ser popular, para tener pareja, etc.

[94] El ser gay sí me ha dado una ventaja y no sólo en el activismo sino por ejemplo en mi trabajo, trabajo en el giro de la construcción que es un espacio muy machista, muy heteronormalizado

[95] Interviewee 9 is a gay man, he is one of the CEOs of the NGO L, which is advocated to LGBTQ topics and is one of the most visible organisations.

[96] Porque siento que el machismo ahí si tiene que ver [en el trabajo inter organizaciones] por ejemplo quienes más hablan en ONG son ellos [hombres gay], me han tocado cosas feas de callar a jóvenes y mujeres, la validación entre ellos es otra cosa.

> "It is complicated to work with gay guys, because I think they have a more visible trajectory than lesbians and they talk about other issues and that they leave us lesbians behind the scenes and even if you try to get out and be in front, they tell you not to, that they need to go out. I was like I was doing everything and, in the end, it was like, 'I am the president.'" (Interviewee 19)[97]

In addition, a stark example of this came about when I interviewed a lesbian (Interviewee 15[98]) who was interviewed with her male boss next to her. He asked us to stay at the same table as him while she was doing the interview. He also interrupted her every time I asked something about the NGO where they worked. Therefore, considering the experiences of the different participants, gay men – as well as other identities performing masculinity/socialised as men – have privileges and it is easier for them to build spaces and in addition, they exercise unequal power relations to identities that are more feminine. In other words, this hierarchy or access to privilege has two sides related to masculinity. On one hand, it is related to how people were socialised under gender norms that shape behaviours considered as feminine or masculine respectively to bodies perceived as males and females. On the other hand, the gender hierarchy is related to how this set of norms is performed in different arenas. It is important to emphasise that norms related to masculinity, as well as the performance of these rules, are privileged over norms of femininity and the people performing them. agendas than for lesbians and bisexual women and other identities that do not perform masculinity. However, trans men are a difficult identity to fit in this statement, because despite they are performing (non) hegemonic masculinity, they do not have access to funding for their agendas and they are, as discussed in the previous section, one of the most invisibilised identities in the LGBTQ arena.

[97] Es complicado trabajar con chicos gays, porque me parece que tienen una trayectoria más visible que las de las mujeres lesbianas y hablan desde otros temas y como que nos dejan a las mujeres lesbianas tras de bambalinas e incluso si intentas como salir y estar al frente, te dicen que no que ellos necesitan salir. yo era como que hacía todo y al final era como "yo soy el presidente".
[98] Participant 15 is a lesbian, working as project manager and facilitator of NGO G.

The visibilisation of the trans women movement accelerated and strengthened faster in comparison to that of the lesbians and bisexual movements, given that trans women are linked with HIV/AIDS as population on risk (Wilson, Arayasirikul and Johnson, 2013). This fact has generated a general perception, from the data gathered, among lesbians and bisexual women that trans women have more access to public spaces and agendas than they do, even though they came to the scene of the LGBTQ movement later. Participants tend to refer to trans women in the same way as they do with a gay man, taking into account the advantage that trans women have over lesbians and bisexual women.

> "Because currently trans matters are getting stronger and that seems very good to me and I congratulate them and I continue accompanying their cause, but I feel that we lesbians are left behind. In addition, patriarchy is still reproducing, along with other things and it is necessary to question many other things [referring to the transsexual movement]." (Interviewee 2)[99]

This is a general perception among the participants about their visibility and agendas; however, in the following quote, the participant says that while there is a specific area and workshop for trans women, the matters of lesbians and bisexual women are addressed along with gay men's topics.

> "The projects are focused on all populations. We cannot focus only in one part of the LGBTQ population, well in the workshop of 'trans pride' yes, but generally when we talk about gay we also speak about women." (Interviewee 16)[100]

Thus, there is a specific concern about creating an exclusive agenda for trans women, which leads to more visibility for them, having access to different spaces almost at the same level as gay men. This is noticeable in the way that participants refer to both identities in the same group.

[99] Porque ahora el tema Trans está tomando mucha fuerza, el tema Trans por sí solo, y eso me parece muy buen y lo felicito y todo y lo sigo acompañando, pero siento que las lesbianas nos volvemos a quedar atrás Y el patriarcado se sigue reproduciendo, junto con otras cosas y es necesario cuestionarnos otras tantas.

[100] Los proyectos van enfocados a todas las poblaciones. No nos podemos especificar en una nada más, o sea en orgullo Trans sí, pero generalmente cuando hablamos de gay hablamos también de mujeres.

> "And then we worked with them [an LGBT NGO]. As I said, we worked a lot with the gay person with the trans girls, I asked them what was happening with the lesbians, and they told me to organise it. And most of them were gay and trans women; we were just two lesbians." (Interviewee 19)[101]

Thus, spaces and agendas for lesbians and bisexual women are more difficult to obtain and they are hindered in gaining or finding spaces for themselves when structurally they are excluded from these, given that public spaces are related to masculine identities or people who were socialised in that way. There is a general agreement among lesbians and bisexual women in which they know that performing femininity within the LGBTQ movement and specifically in NGOs places them in an inferior position in comparison to other identities, as these participants state:

> "Being gay is a very different thing to being lesbians or being trans woman, but in those spaces [LGBTQ movement] we do not have positions in the best place." (Interviewee 5)[102]

> "Trans women are already generating their own spaces. And that is perfect because their own struggles are their own experiences and then they put in their own agenda what they need." (Interviewee 2)[103]

Therefore, trans women have, in a similar way to gay men, access to spaces and agendas given the way that they were socialised under the set of gender norms that are considered as masculine. As a consequence, there is a feeling of oppression among lesbians and bisexual women, regarding specifically spaces and agendas that are a particular sort of privilege related more to gender norms

[101] Y pues era con los que trabajábamos y pues yo decía hemos trabajado un montón con el chico gay con las chicas Trans y decía qué onda con lo de las les y me decían pues organízalo. Y la mayoría eran gays y mujeres Trans, solo éramos dos lesbianas.
[102] Entre ser gay es una cosa muy distinta a ser mujeres lesbianas, Trans pero que en esos espacios [movimiento LGBTQ] las lesbianas no es que estemos en el mejor lugar.
[103] Las mujeres trans ya están generando sus propios espacios. Y lo cual es perfecto porque son sus propias luchas sus propias vivencias y entonces que pongan en su agenda propia lo que necesitan.

than sexual orientation and gender identities. As this participant stated, regarding the different gendered education received cis and trans women:

> "It is very difficult to talk about trans women because, on the one hand, they lost many privileges, but on the other hand, they have different empowerment education." (Interviewee 12)[104]

Thus, as reviewed in the previous section where I discussed the hierarchy, trans women and their movement have different advantages when we talk about access to agendas and public spaces specifically, given that they have in some extent a relationship with masculinity when they were raised under those gender norms. Therefore, it can be seen that the hierarchy within LGBTQ NGOs is related to essentialist understandings of masculinity, with the trans women movement being a good example.

However, this is not the only way in which identities are related to masculinities. Participants also recognise that gender expression and the way in which women perform masculinity has an important role within the LGBTQ hierarchies and less or more visibilisation of certain LGBTQ identities. Hence, women, specifically lesbians who perform a more masculine gender expression, are considered as more powerful and visible in comparison to lesbians and bisexual women that are more feminine.

> "Nobody likes women with power and Nancy and Adriana are women with a lot of power. It seems to me that in politics it is not even that people do not like what they do, but it is just because they have power." (Interviewee 11)[105]

Therefore, gender expression and gendered attributes influence the gender dynamics, considering that power is an attribute related directly to masculinity. Another example, which helps to grasp this idea

[104] Es muy complejo hablar de las mujeres Trans porque por un lado si perdieron muchos privilegios, pero por otro lado alguna tiene educación de empoderamiento distinta.

[105] a nadie le gustan las mujeres con poder y Gloria y Patria son mujeres con mucho poder. A mí me parece que a la política ni siquiera es que no les guste lo que hacen si no, es nada más porque tienen poder.

links to NGO J. Indeed, NGO J has as CEO a person who now identifies himself as a queer or trans man (he identified himself as a lesbian for many years) and two persons who worked with him perceived unequal power relations in their relationships.

> "There was an unequal power relationship with René… completely, it seems to me that over the years I can see it very clearly [...] I think it was linked to some extent to the use of identities [gender expression]." (Interviewee 6)[106]

Interviewee 6 worked with this person for many years and now she can notice that he was exercising power over her. Nowadays, a new worker of NGO J also feels an unequal relationship of power. However, she feels that it has been decreasing over the last years.

> "Because of the gender hierarchy [between general management and the workers], I know that all this I will say it, and the CEO [trans man] is not going to say it. Because in the end, it is he who makes the economic-administrative decisions, in reality. But I think now there is much more equal communication, as I have more time I think I have made changes in the organisation, at least now there are many issues that already communicate between us, there are others that do not." (Interviewee 2)[107]

This couple of different instances show that workers within NGOs, lesbians and bisexual women NGOs specifically, perceive masculine gender expression of lesbianism (or of a trans man) as a tool of power because they are identified as 'less' female.

> "Especially Nancy, Nancy exercises power in a very unequal way, but like all coordinators, feminist organisers, we are all very aggressive." (Interviewee 11)[108]

[106] Había una relación de poder vertical con René, completamente, me parece que al paso de los años si logro verla muy claro [...]Creo que hasta cierto punto era como una utilización de las identidades [expresión de género].

[107] Por la jerarquía de género [entre la coordinación general]. Sé que todo esto lo diré yo y no la Coordinación General. Porque al final sí es él quien toma las decisiones Económico Administrativas y de personal en realidad. Pero creo que ahora ya hay muchos más rebotes, como yo tengo más tiempo creo que he hecho cambios en la organización, al menos ahora hay muchos temas que ya rebota entre nosotros, hay otros que no.

[108] En especial con Nancy, Nancy ejerce el poder de una manera muy vertical, pero como todas las coordinadoras, organizadoras feministas, todas somos muy violentas.

Thus, the binary division of masculinity/femininity shapes gender dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs and privileges not only gay identities but puts in a better position any kind of identity linked to masculinity to some extent. In contrast to masculinity, the following section shows how specific attributes related to femininity influence the developing of lesbians and bisexual women's visibility in the LGBTQ movement.

Emotional relationships and how they shape gender dynamics within NGOs

Another finding which emerged through this research is the impact that emotional and romantic relationships among people within LGBTQ NGOs have on the gender dynamics in these spaces, particularly how romantic relationships shape NGOs of lesbians and bisexual women, as well as how they influence the endurance and stability of the organisations. Although emotions tend to be seen as something irrelevant in workspaces, politics and in general in the public spaces — which is also linked to gender roles –, it is important to acknowledge that emotions are embedded in all our spheres of life and social relations: "emotions 'matter' for politics; emotions show us how power shapes the very surface of bodies as well worlds" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 12). This makes it crucial to highlight within this project how emotions determine to some extent the visibility of lesbians and bisexual women in the LGBTQ movement in Mexico.

Society, as I mentioned before, is divided into binary concepts that are hierarchised one over another: men over women, heterosexuality over homosexuality, and culture over nature, among others, (for example, the diagram offered by Bourdieu (2001) in which he divides the characteristics and opposites of masculinity and femininity and all the different words and social norms that are understood as the order of the things). One of those characteristics that is related to gender is rationality over emotionality, in which women are considered more emotional than men are, and men more rational

than women. As a consequence women are socialised – as part of femininity and their role in life – to prioritise emotions (Colley, 2003; Brody, 2010; Syed, 2008) over rational behaviour. Negotiating personal relationships within the workplace, in particular romantic ones, is entwined with the gendered background expression and prioritisation of emotions. Thus, women on one side prioritise their emotions over their professional careers, and on the other, they overlap emotional relationships with professional careers.

This particular dynamic occurs in the LGBTQ arena in Mexico: lesbians and bisexual women in their effort to find spaces for themselves outside the LGBTQ sphere, which is more focused on gay men, create their own NGOs. However, there is a tendency in which they create their collectives, associations and NGOs in partnership with their romantic partners, as many participants commented:

> "We got involved [together with her partner] little by little; we started in a group of lesbian feminists, anti-bisexual and anti-everything. They were pulling us all, the march was something much smaller and they already invited Martina [partner] and me to be part of the organisation [...] We started looking for support with the parties and so on, but there were many attempts that did not work with other groups." (Interviewee 17)[109]

> "For that reason, our interest [her partner and hers] was more focused on working with lesbians, but as Adriana [partner] was the coordinator at the time of the NGO D we had pressure to open a space for the LGBT population." (Interviewee 10)[110]

[109] Nos fuimos metiendo [Junto con su pareja] poco a poco, empezamos en un grupo de lesbianas feministas anti bisexuales y anti todo. Nos fueron jalando a todo, la marcha era algo mucho más pequen y ya nos invitaron a Martina [pareja] y a mí a que fuéramos parte de la organización […] Nos metimos a buscar apoyo con los partidos y a así, pero hubo muchos intentos que no cuajaron con otros grupos.

[110] Pues por eso nuestro interés [su pareja y ella] estaba más centrado en el trabajo con las mujeres lesbianas, pero como Adriana [pareja] era la coordinadora en ese momento de la ONG D tuvimos una presión para que abriéramos un espacio para la población LGBT.

> "She came from Spain and we became girlfriends and we lasted 6 years, we stayed with the association both of us. I was the treasurer and she was the director and we were working on many topics." (Interviewee 19)[111]

Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women, who are looking for the creation of spaces (NGOs, collectives and associations) for their own, to be able to carry on with their agendas and interests, improving their living conditions, see their emotional partners as the first place to look for support to build those organisations. However, as a consequence, these spaces (organisations) tend to be unstable because they do not only depend on the classic variables only, such as funding and the time staff have available to devote to the organisation, but they also depend on the sustainability of the romantic relationship, which does not have a direct relation with the operation of the NGO, becoming a hindrance for the development of the organisation (Mainiero, 1986; Wilson, 2015; Alder and Quist, 2014). As some participants expressed this concern or critic.

> "They had fights and the association broke up, Bertha was Lucia's partner and she started dating someone else and that's it." (Interviewee 3)[112]

> "Lesbian groups tend to be formed by a couple, and they are destroyed because they end their relationship, and that is a particular dynamic of the groups of women." (Interviewee 17)[113]

Thus, participants are conscious and aware of this issue, as well as of the matter of how to build NGOs among partners, as a hindrance for durable NGOs. In addition, there is an interest in looking for solutions to this. As two participants mentioned:

[111] Ella llegó de España y nos hicimos novias y duramos 6 años, nos quedamos con la asociación las dos. Yo estaba como tesorera y ella directora y estuvimos trabajando muchos temas diferentes.
[112] Tuvieron broncas y tronó la asociación, Bertha era pareja de Lucia y empezó a andar con alguien más y ya.
[113] Los grupos lésbicos tienden a estar formados por una pareja, y se destruyen porque terminan con su relación, y que es una dinámica particular de los grupos de mujeres.

> "[T]hat the organisation has sustainable management organisation, because then there is a head or two, that without them everything is screwed and there is no follow-up or those in charge fight and no longer continue with the NGO." (Interviewee 1)[114]

> "Right now, with Jessica [her partner] we are starting a project together and we were planning what would happen if we break up. Who is going to keep the name? etc., and also with the topic of profits, I do not want to make a fund together, because I have already seen sad stories where the fund is taken by one." (Interviewee 6)[115]

Nevertheless, there is a core element of this issue that is important to develop, the tendency for women to place their emotions over the professional career that is their organisation. As I mentioned, this is related to gender and cultural norms (Brody, 2010; Syed, 2008), which is supported by my dataset, because this dynamic tends to happen only in organisations led by women, while the dynamics are different in organisations lead by gay men, showing that romantic relationships in the workplace are handled differently by men and women (Gutek, 1985; Pierce, 1998; Boyd, 2010; Horan and Chory, 2013). Thus, the durability of the organisation depends of the owners' romantic relationship, as the following participant said:

> "In collectives in Tijuana, some women did a poll and they found that all the collectives have ended because the relationships between couples are over. It's something that happens all the time. I've seen it recently and everything finishes because they are in the mood of 'I contributed this, and you gave this.' But I think it follows a segmentation system. On the other hand, guys have sex and continue working together, while women we have sex and we do not want to see each other again. It is related to the gender system, but I think it is necessary to separate from the work. I think it's that romanticisation of lesbians all holding hands together." (Interviewee 12)[116]

---

[114] Que la organización tenga gobierno sustentable, porque hay unas en las que hay una o dos cabezas, que sin esas se jode todo ya no hay quien le dé seguimiento, o se pelean y ya no siguen con la ONG.

[115] Ahorita con Jessica estamos tirando proyecto juntas y si planteábamos que va a pasar si terminamos. Quien se va a quedar el nombre y eso, y lo mismo cuando haya ganancias no quiero que se haga un fondo juntas, porque ya he visto tristes historias donde el fondo se lo queda una.

[116] En las colectivas en Tijuana, unas morras hicieron un rastreo y todas las colectivas se han terminado porque las relaciones se terminan, y es algo que pasa todo el tiempo yo lo he visto recientemente y vale todo porque se ponen el plan de "yo puse esto, y tú

Therefore, the way in which men and women negotiate romantic relationships in their workplace varies, because of societal and moral norms – which are embedded in gender norms (Syed, 2008). In other words, men do not have the same social pressures related to their morality and the normative associated with sexuality and modesty. Conversely, women are socialised to weight emotions and morality higher, while men do not weight it as something as important. As this participant expresses:

> "While men use their relationships for academic or professional purposes. If I did, I would feel uncomfortable. I'm using my body." (Interviewee 6)[117]

Thus, gendered socialisation regarding emotions and moral norms has as a result that men and women approach romantic relationships within LGBTQ NGOs in distinct ways. Thus, this morality embedded in the patriarchal system on one hand privileging men who separate romantic relationships from their professional life, or use this as a tool to create networks and ultimately take advantage of these sort of relationships; while on the other hand, lesbians and bisexual women having emotional relationships within the NGOs causing the instability that risks the end of the organisations.

Consequently, the specifically gendered norm about how to manage emotions for women is a hindrance to having lasting NGOs and to building long-term agendas, as well as to accomplishing aims for their organisations, frustrating from another front the development of women's NGOs, and this is the most relevant for them:

> "What we really had to do was strengthen the lesbian movement, because it cannot be that one year you invite women to do something and in one year their organisations no

esto", Pero creo que obedece a un sistema de segmentación. En cambio, los vatos cogen y siguen trabajando, en cambio las morras cogemos y ya no nos queremos volver a ver. Y atiende a cosas del sistema, pero hay que separar de la chamba. Creo que es esa romantización de las lesbianas tomadas de las manos.

[117] Mientras los hombres utilizan sus esas relaciones para poder académico. Si yo lo hiciera me haría ruido estoy utilizando mi cuerpo.

> longer exist, that there is nothing, that everything is so weak in the movements. Lesbian collectives are the ones that cannot last." (Interviewee 11)[118]

Therefore, as the data gathered for this research points out, the expectations of femininity that link women to care and emotionality and morality, sometimes undermine the sustainability of women's NGOs as these tend to be less stable, competitive and professionalised.

Conclusion

The way in which gender dynamics are built into NGOs dedicated to LGBTQ matters are closely attached to heteropatriarchal norms, even though LGBTQ NGOs are looking to reduce inequalities regarding sexual orientation and gender identities. However, it is important to bear in mind that being aware of sexual diversity rights is not necessarily linked to consciousness and sensitivity to issues particular to sexual minorities among women. The analysis done on how LGBTQ identities are hierarchised within these organisations shows clearly how patriarchal norms permeate the LGBTQ movement, in which masculinity is privileged over femininity. Therefore, gay men are at the top of the hierarchy, given that they are the most visible population of the sexual diversity groups, as well as due to their access to spaces, funding and having successful results in their agenda. The next group are trans women, then lesbians followed by bisexuals, and at the end non-fixed identities such as non-binary and queer people.

As I noted in the second section, the cornerstone of this hierarchy is the relationship that each identity has with masculinity, in which the way that this occurs shapes the dynamics of LGBTQ NGOs regarding gender. Thus, the way in which masculinity is performed by each identity adjusts its place in

[118] Lo que realmente teníamos que hacer era fortalecer el movimiento lésbico, porque no puede ser que un año invites a hacer algo a las mujeres y en un año ya no existen sus organizaciones, que no exista nada, que todo sea tan endeble en los movimientos. Las colectivas lésbicas son las que no aguantan.

the hierarchy, which is embedded in phallocentric dynamics. This is complicated by the position of trans people in the LGBTQ NGOs, where trans women are placed high up and trans men low down, which I suggest may partly be due to the way in which they were socialised as children. Indeed, this especially pronounced with trans women in the LGBTQ arena; where the education and socialisation of trans women offers a good example to show how biological determinism and phallocentricity works, with the result that that trans women are considered to hold a higher position than lesbians and bisexual women because they had more access to male privilege in a specific period of their lives. According to my participants, even if lesbians and bisexual women have been in the LGBTQ movement for longer, trans women tend to have acquired a skill set to negotiate the community more effectively. However, this does not hinder the recognition of trans women as women, with all the social hindrances that performing femininity implies as trans women, while regarded higher up the LGBTQ hierarchy, face multiple challenges rooted in their specific experiences of a gendered society, which are not captured by my data. Finally, there is another important element that shapes these dynamics, the manner in which women rank their professional careers and their emotional and romantic relationships. As I explained in the third section, their gender socialisation as women also permeates how they develop their role in the LGBTQ movement and their NGOs.

In conclusion, the invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women is directly related to how gender dynamics are developed within the LGBTQ movement, generating a hierarchy that privileges identities closer to masculinity, showing that gay men are at the top of the hierarchy, being the most masculine of the identities, while bodies socialised as feminine, positioning emotions over rational thinking, are more invisibilised with less access to their own physical spaces and funding, as well as fewer results for their agendas and impact. Therefore, gender dynamics are a hindrance for developing lesbians and bisexual organisations and agendas within the LGBTQ movement in Mexico.

CHAPTER FIVE
Problematic gender dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico: Material relations

Introduction

This chapter is the complement of the first empirical chapter. While the first chapter set out to show the hierarchies of the LGBTQ movement in Mexico regarding social dynamics, perceptions and relationships among the community; it also helped to introduce how social relations work in this specific part of the LGBTQ community that are the LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. This second chapter encompasses the materialisation of those social relationships, showing how lesbians and bisexual women shape and negotiate them in physical and symbolic spaces, agendas, links, and resources in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico.

This will be done using their perceptions, as well as their experiences, and how they are situated inside (or outside) of the institutionalisation of their demands thereby allowing us to answer (RQ2) *What factors have contributed to the failure of lesbians and bisexual women in getting their agendas heard in LGBTQ NGOs*

in Mexico? Therefore, this chapter shows and analyses more practical and material matters such as the access to resources, how sponsors and funding are organised and hierarchised, and how lesbians and bisexual women find forms of organisation independent of LGBTQ and feminist NGOs, as a consequence of their circumstances and despite the same circumstances. A key concern of this chapter is to explain and make sense of how the opportunities and access to rights within NGOs are permeated by gender dynamics that follow heteropatriarchal and phallocentric norms, which also includes the economic system.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. In the first section, I discuss the relationship that lesbians and bisexual women have with LGBTQ and feminist organisations. In addition, I analyse how this group experiences a lack of belonging to the LGBTQ and feminist movements and despite this, they try to find different links to share experiences and agendas to be more visible, but given the heteropatriarchal norms they experience obstacles to doing so. The situation results in an imperative need on the part of lesbians and bisexual women to construct their own spaces, therefore section two explores the understanding and relevance of spaces for them, both physical and symbolic, in the LGBTQ movement. This section works as preamble for third section, in which is addressed the construction of spaces exclusive for lesbians and bisexual women. They serve to visibilise their own agendas and search for their own funding to have a feeling of belonging in these exclusive spaces, which leads us to the four and final section. This section addresses the material matter of funding and access to resources of the LGBTQ organisations, as well as how the funding is hierarchised depending on the issues of the different identities and their agendas, showing that the last priority of donors is to fund the agendas of lesbians and bisexual women and their organisations.

Lack of belonging to feminist and LGBTQ movements

In the previous chapter, I reviewed and analysed the position that lesbians and bisexual women occupy within the LGBTQ hierarchy – which is not very highly ranked – regarding their status inside the community, showing that they do not have access to spaces and agendas on a level of recognition and social relationship, despite their undeniable inhabitation of those spaces (Bell, Binnie, Cream and Valentine, 1994). This section analyses how despite lesbians' and bisexual women's historical presence in different ways and to some extent in the LGBTQ movement in Mexico, they do not feel that they belong to the LGBTQ movement nowadays. One of the possible layers or factors that cause this situation could be that lesbians and bisexual women do not feel part of those organisations because LGBTQ NGOs do not have an agenda, actions or programmes that represent lesbians and bisexual women within LGBTQ organisations. The sense of belonging is very important for identity (Homans, 2013) and social movements, thus if these women do not feel part of the wider LGBTQ movement it is difficult to take part in the community in all senses of it, in terms of agendas and influence on the path of the NGO or community. This feeling is recurrent in the perception of the interviewees, as one of them says:

> "What is serious is that they think that the movement of HIV is the LGBT movement because also, we lesbians are not there and we will not be. So, it was very impressive, so far they prioritise HIV tests, and I think that's fine, but they do not do actions that include lesbians." (Interviewee 5)[119]

Hence, the hypervisibilisation of HIV is one of the most recurring reasons mentioned for why lesbians and bisexual women feel that they are not taken into account in these organisations. Moreover, the

[119] Lo que está cabrón es que se piense que el movimiento de VIH es el movimiento LGBT, porque además en ese movimiento, ahí no estamos las lesbianas y no vamos a estar, entonces pues fue muy fuerte, hasta la fecha prioriza pruebas de VIH, y me parece bien, pero no hace acciones que incluyan a las lesbianas.

lack of belonging is directly related to the assumption that LGBTQ movement is only a gay movement (Browne, 2006; Alder and Benner, 1992; Valentine, 2002; Ward and Schneider, 2009, Ghosh, 2015; Mercer, 2004), as the perception of this participant states:

> "I had been in the LGBT groups and the lobby was gay, most of them were men and it was like where are the lesbians? Dear gay, I like you, but you and I have different experiences. Where are the lesbians and the actions for us, where are they? [...] Well, it is still necessary [to make lesbians visible]; because I believe that we have been systematically erased from history, no matter how much the L is in the LGBT." (Interviewee 2)[120]

Thus, these participants highlight how in Mexico lesbians and bisexual women do not feel represented by LGBTQ NGOs; consequently, they do not feel a particular belonging to the LGBTQ movement, even though they have been inside the movement from the beginning (Fuentes Ponce, 2015).

It is important to grasp and analyse how this lack of belonging was built, because lesbians largely were one of the first communities in coming out to fight for lesbian and gay rights. Lesbians have been fighting in Mexico for LGBTQ rights since the beginning of the movement in the 1970s (Hinojosa, 2001). Thus, it does not seem logical that nowadays they have no space or sense of ownership in the movement in which they were pioneers. LGBTQ movements are gendered, in as much as women independently of their sexual orientation are less part of social movements and activism that are connected with public space and those are linked to men (Card, 1990; Warner, 1991) independently of their sexual orientation. Therefore, even though the LGBTQ movement and its organisations do not discriminate against lesbians and bisexual women because of their sexual orientation, they are subordinated because of their gender.

[120] Había estado en los grupos de LGBT y el lobby era gay, la mayoría eran hombres y era como dónde están las lesbianas, joto querido, marica lo que quieras, pero tú y yo tenemos experiencias distintas ¿dónde están las lesbianas y las acciones para nosotras dónde están? […] Bueno, todavía es necesario [hacer visibles a las mujeres lesbianas] porque creo que nos han borrado sistemáticamente de la historia, sin importar cuánto esté la L en el LGBT.

Consequently, lesbians and bisexual women prefer to build relationships with the feminist movement rather than the LGBTQ, or even if they are part of both, they generate to some extent a feeling of belonging to the feminist movement – and its organisations – in comparison to the LGBTQ movement, as one of the interviewees claimed:

> "The lesbian identity is more focused on feminism than the LGBT or the bisexual movement." (Interviewee 6)[121]

This sense of belonging works as a kind of resignation regarding the impossibility of having exclusive spaces for non-heterosexual women, because the preference for feminist organisations over LGBTQ ones is due to the fact that LGBTQ NGOs do not address their agendas to any extent, because despite the fact that the HIV/AIDS agenda has some relevance to lesbians and bisexual women, the relationship to that agenda is not a direct one and therefore not the main concern of lesbians and bisexual women. Nevertheless, feminist spaces are not inclusive for lesbians and bisexual women by themselves either. Even though those spaces are dedicated to fighting for women's rights, participants have a general perception that feminist spaces are heterosexual, which means that their agendas and aims are focused on matters that concern heterosexual women more, such as reproductive rights; thus participants feel that there is no space for lesbian and bisexual agendas, as some of the interviewees raised in different contexts and situations:

> "I was treasurer and she was CEO. We were working on many subjects, but I felt that the association was very focused on heterosexual issues." (Interviewee 19)[122]

This interviewee shows how the NGO where she was participating before, never showed an interest in visibilising a lesbian agenda, even though two non-heterosexual women were in charge of it, while

[121] La identidad lésbica está más enfocada hacia el feminismo que lo LGBT o lo bisexual.

[122] Yo estaba como tesorera y ella directora y estuvimos trabajando muchos temas, pero yo sentía que la asociación estaba muy enfocada en temas heterosexuales.

another interviewee recognised that not all the feminist NGOs invisibilise lesbian and bisexual agendas, but the majority do so and the tendency is to exclusion.

> "All feminist organisations we work with, except for two, are all very straight [heterosexual], and although they work on sexual rights, they work on those of heterosexual women, their work is not for lesbians." (Interviewee 5)[123]

Therefore, it is difficult to find NGOs within the feminist movement that consider lesbian and bisexual matters as relevant within their objectives and agendas, because it can be seen that when different organisations or sponsors create programmes or agendas for feminists, they do not think about women that are part of the LGBTQ community, as one interviewee claimed:

> "They [activists] carried out a feminist programme and there was absolutely nothing about lesbians, they made a closed call." [124] (Interviewee 8[125])

Hence, feminist NGOs usually do not aim at lesbians' and bisexual women's agendas, causing exclusion, discrimination and invisibilisation of their identities. One of the reasons and justifications to this exclusion is it is seen as better by some activists that were interviewed to work for specific agendas; they consider it easier to have agendas that are more specialised for each specific issue or matter of women and the LGBTQ community.

> "Moving forward in general agendas in NGOs is much slower. I do not see it as such a bad thing that there is not a single collective in the world where all the colours of the flag are, but that it only serves one specific colour." (Interviewee 4)[126]

[123] Todas las organizaciones feministas con las que trabajamos a excepción de un par todas son muy heterosexuales; y aunque trabajan derechos sexuales son de mujeres heterosexuales, hacen trabajo que no es para las lesbianas.
[124] Hicieron un programa feminista y no había absolutamente nada de mujeres lesbianas, hicieron una convocatoria cerrada.
[125] Interviewee 8 is a lesbian working in a NGO of LGBTQ matters (I), she works as a convenor, but she has been involved in the LGBTQ scene for many years, outside of Mexico city.
[126] Avanzar en agentes generales en colectivos es mucho más lento, y es que yo no lo veo tan mal, si veo mal que no haya una sola colectiva en el mundo mundial que estén todos los colores de la bandera, sino que es un color en específico.

Thus, for some activists it is necessary to have aims that are focused only on one specific issue in order to be able to achieve goals and rights that are relevant to one or other feminist or LGBTQ NGOs. This is because when organisations work on agendas for the whole LGBTQ community, they often invisibilise part of the community that is supposed to be benefitting. Thus, the same community (lesbians and bisexual women) are not helped by broad feminist or LGBTQ agendas, as a couple of interviewees expressed.

> "What we saw is that lesbians who work in LGBT or feminist organisations [...] could not work on the lesbian agenda." (Interviewee 11)[127]

> "Regarding trans women, I see that they are very different realities and that there are trans women who live with other women, that there are trans lesbians and bisexual women, and that is a reality that we have to work. We have to criticise other forms, that is, hetero-feminist women." (Interviewee 12)[128]

Consequently, it is difficult for activists to bear in mind and work on lesbian and bisexual agendas within NGOs that are advocated to feminism because, in the same way as LGBTQ NGOs, there is no space for specific agendas for them. In addition, lesbians and bisexual women working there are working on topics of heterosexual women or gay men, given that their agendas do not exist.

> "I was looking for women who work on women's sexual health issues and the reality is that there are not many, or it is very difficult to reach them because they work on LGBT issues and by 'LGBT issues', understand gay issues and the issue of HIV, which is what the majority is dedicated to; or sexual and reproductive rights that have to do with ILE

[127] Lo que vimos es que las lesbianas que trabajan en organizaciones LGBT o feministas pues sus organizaciones aguantan, pero no eran suyas y no podían meter a la agenda lésbica**.**

[128] Con mujeres Trans y topo que son realidades bien diferentes y que hay mujeres Trans que viven con otras mujeres, que hay Trans lesbianas y bisexuales. y es una realidad que tenemos que trabajar. Que tenemos que hacerles una crítica a otras formas, a las morras hetero feministas.

> [abortion] that are working with heterosexual women. So, it is very difficult to find women who work with lesbians and bisexual women." (Interviewee 3)[129]

Even though there is no agenda for lesbians and bisexual women in these two different spaces, they consider it important to generate a link among feminist, LGBTQ and their own spaces (lesbian and bisexual NGOs). Thus, some NGOs regardless of following the separatist path, look for dialogue and feedback, which allow a better understanding of the LGBTQ/feminist arena. Some NGOs, as the interviewees stated have an interest in working together, despite the difference of claims:

> "Just as with feminists we have dialogues with the LGBTI movement, it is a challenge. It seems to me that one of the great things [that differentiate the agendas of LGBTQ and lesbians and bisexual women] is that they are very different actors." (Interviewee 5)[130]

Although LGBTQ, feminist and lesbian and bisexual organisations cannot share the same agendas, they have links and connections to enhance their own agendas by themselves with help and feedback from the others. Relying upon the data gathered, sharing spaces does not function for lesbians and bisexual women, given that as I have shown they are invisibilised in LGBTQ and heterosexual feminist spaces. The institutionalised lesbian feminist movement – which will be reviewed in more detail later in this chapter – is an example of how dialogue and links between feminist and LGBTQ movements can help to make movements of lesbians and bisexual women stronger, and some activists are aware of that.

> "The lesbian-feminist movement has been among the most critical and left-wing sectors within the feminist movement and LGBT. It seems that there is no one as hardworking

[129] Andaba buscando mujeres que trabajan temas de salud sexual entre mujeres y la verdad es que no hay muchas o es muy complicado llegar a ellas porque trabajan tema LGBT y por tema lgbt entiéndase gay y el tema del VIH que es a lo que se dedica la mayoría o derechos sexuales y reproductivos que tiene que ver con ILE que trabaja con mujeres heterosexuales. Entonces es bien complicado encontrar a mujeres que trabajen con temas de mujeres lesbianas y bisexual

[130] Así como con las feministas tenemos diálogos igual con el movimiento LGBTI es todo un reto. A mí me parece que una de las grandes cosas es que son actores muy distintos.

> as lesbians. In addition, they have just led the two movements to analysis and criticism that they would not have reached without the lesbians taking them there." (Interviewee 11)[131]

Thus, occasionally there are effective results regarding the way that lesbians and bisexual women look to fit in within LGBTQ/feminist activism.

> "NGO D is a very different space, it is a space for lesbian feminists, not lesbian-feminists, that is important to mention. This is a very complicated thing because it means that we are part of the LGBTTTI movement, the feminist movement and also the lesbian movement." (Interviewee 5)[132]

Another situation that came with the links and connections among organisations is how their relationships are not by themselves helpful, positive and equal. There are spaces in which members reproduce misogynist attitudes, despite being in spaces of dialogue, as some women have experienced in LGBTQ spaces.

> "I think it has to do [the joint participation of NGOs] with the feminist perspective, so we know which [NGOs] we can work with because I feel that *machismo* there does have a lot of influence. For example, those who participate most in the decisions in NGOs are them [gay men]. I have been in ugly situations in which they [gay men] silence young people and women." (Interviewee 18)[133]

Nonetheless, the situation is embedded in gender issues that permeate LGBTQ NGOs. The situation of discrimination and invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women within LGBTQ NGOs and

[131] El movimiento lesbofeminista ha sido de los sectores más críticos y de izquierda dentro del movimiento feminista y LGBT, parece que no hay nadie tan aguerrido como las lesbianas. Y que justo han llevado a los dos movimientos a análisis y críticas que no lo habían llevado sin que las lesbianas lo llevaran ahí.

[132] La ONG D es un espacio muy diferente, es un espacio de lesbianas feministas, no lesbo-feministas, eso es importante mencionarlo. Esto es una cosa muy complicada porque quiere decir que somos parte del movimiento LGBTTTI, del movimiento feminista y además del movimiento lésbico.

[133] Yo creo que tiene que ver la perspectiva feminista. entonces sabemos que son con las que podemos trabajar, porque siento que el machismo ahí si tiene que ver por ejemplo quienes más hablan en ONG son ellos, me han tocado cosas feas de callar a jóvenes y mujeres.

feminist NGOs is something deeper, which is related to the position of lesbians and bisexual women in Western societies in relation to men in general, and gay men specifically in the LGBTQ movement. This will be discussed in the following chapter (6), in which I discuss the fact that these women are subject to wider processes of gender and sexuality discrimination which exist outside the LGBTQ spaces. Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women face discrimination on two different levels, given their identities as women in the first place and as non-heterosexuals, which are subordinated socially. As one of the participants claimed,

> "Women are not recognised as subjects of rights, and while women are not recognised, neither are they recognised as sexed subjects, women's sexuality is not recognised as long as it is not heterosexual and reproductive." (Interviewee 2)[134]

Hence, lesbians and bisexual women are discriminated against on two levels: first, due to their gender and second, due to their sexual orientation, in which they do not fit with the stereotype of women, because they are not considered as reproductive bodies or mothers-to-be (Lind, 2009). This results in a lack of belonging to both movements: in the LGBTQ because of misogyny and in the feminist because of heterosexism (Alcorro-Heredia, 2019). Thus, lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico experience a lack of access to spaces. For a better understanding, the following section addresses the relevance of spaces as a category to analyse the invisibilisation of those identities in the LGBTQ arena.

[134] No se reconoce a las Mujeres como sujeto de derechos. Y en tanto que no se reconoce las mujeres no se reconoce tampoco que es sujeto sexuado no sabe sexo en términos de no se reconoce la sexual en tanto que no sea heterosexual y reproductiva

Queer spaces

Space is another matter that is intertwined in the imaginary of belonging, identity and visibilisation of LGBTQ people, as I developed in the theoretical chapter. Although there is a general understanding of the meaning of "space", it is fundamental to untangle how spaces – in plural – shape and enhance social and power relations within the LGBTQ arena in Mexico, becoming a core category for this research. Grasping the social relevance of spaces outside of their physical or spatial essence allows another level of comprehension of the construction of hierarchies and levels of visibilisation within LGBTQ NGOs. In addition, knowing the social relevance of spaces opens the door to grasping the persistence of lesbians and bisexual women in looking for spaces that are exclusive for their needs and agendas.

The first observation that was raised about spaces is their usage in creating community (Bell, 1991) and as an instrument of collective survival (Oswin, 2008). Therefore, spaces are weighted with the idea of support among the members.

> "So it's important to get together first, to know each other and I think it's to know that we are not alone." (Interviewee 2)[135]

Consequently, lesbians and bisexual women are trying to create links and networks among one another as a way of creating community and feeling that they can create their spaces.

> "The word 'networks' was very important [for the association] because we thought that this was very important for women, that it is what gives us strength." (Interviewee 14)[136]

[135] Entonces es importante primero juntaros entre nosotras, sabernos juntas y creo que es saber que no estamos solas.
[136] La palabra "redes" era muy importante [para la asociación] porque pensábamos que eso era muy importante en las mujeres, que es lo que nos da la fortaleza.

This prevailing need for having spaces is related to the lack of belonging to any of the movements (feminist and LGBTQ) discussed in the last section, because the construction of associations and NGOs gives them a feeling of community (Bell, 1991), as one participant expressed:

> "We are seeking to generate spaces, as recognition of identity with other movements; at this moment of fundamentalisms, we have an agenda, which defends the territory. It seems to me that NGO D has a very strong commitment to lesbians and the lesbian movement, even with lesbians that are not organised. The organisation is very clear about its role and mission." (Interviewee 5)[137]

Thus, it is easy to see that they are looking to create a community in their groups in a physical way and also in the collective imaginary. This shows that both spaces, physical and symbolic, have importance for them, but it appears to be a specific characteristic of the Mexican LGBTQ realm, as was expressed from this participant:

> "So I have not accepted favours from organisations in Mexico, because they are very jealous of their spaces and resources. In addition, we are an organisation in Mexico led by Mexicans, but we are ultimately an international project." (Interviewee 1)[138]

Finally, another matter regarding community and spaces that arose in the data is that the need of the community is not only related to political participation – which is the main aim of the NGOs – there are also groups of people in the LGBTQ arena who do not consider themselves activists, but rather they are only looking for spaces to generate community, instead of looking to participate in political matters.

[137] Estamos buscando generar espacios, como reconocimiento de identidad con otros movimientos, en este momento de los fundamentalismos. Aquí tenemos agenda con aquello defiende territorio, me parece que la ONG tiene un compromiso muy fuerte con las lesbianas y el movimiento lésbico, incluso con mujeres lesbianas no organizadas. La organización tiene muy claro cuál es su papel y su misión.

[138] Así que no he tenido que cobrar favores de organizaciones en México, porque son muy celosos de sus espacios y sus canicas. Además, pues sí somos una organización en México llevada por mexicanos, pero somos al final de cuentas un proyecto internacional.

> "Yes there are young bisexuals, but they have no political interest, it is only about reaffirming their bisexuality." (Interviewee 6)[139]

> "I was looking identifying myself and I found a Facebook group that was about feminist bisexuals, and there were only one woman and me. The meeting never happened." (Interviewee 6) [140]

These examples are specific to bisexual people, who, as discussed in the previous chapter, experience more difficulties in finding community and platforms. They do not have their own physical spaces to socialise, as well as to generate a movement or any kind of political activity, and therefore it is more complicated to make themselves visible and strengthen their identity, because having spaces is also related with building an identity (Valentine, 2002).

In addition to the sense of community and the influence that spaces have in the construction of identities, gender and sexuality are also relevant, as I developed in depth in my theory chapter, understanding spaces as something that are not only physical but, in addition, symbolic and abstract (Hemmings, 1997). Consequently, spaces are sexualised (Bell and Valentine, 1995; Valentine, 1996) and gendered (Valentine, 1993; Alder and Benner, 1992; Ingram, 1993; Bell, Binnie, Cream and Valentine, 1994; Knopp, 1995; Valentine, 2002; Doan, 2010). In other words, how men and women have access to spaces is different. The dichotomy of private-public is the best example of this, whereby historically women have been related to the private space and men to the public, creating a disadvantage for women who want to inhabit the public sphere. This is evident in the LGBTQ arena in Mexico in which men have more spaces than women, as many activists stated:

[139] Si hay jóvenes bisexuales, pero no hay interés político, sólo como una onda de reafirmación de la bisexualidad.

[140] Mientras yo buscaba gente como yo encontré un grupo de Facebook que era sobre bisexuales feminista. Y había solo una mujer y yo. Nunca se logró una reunión.

> "I always offer space to lesbians, because here [LGBTQ community] it is solely men." (Interviewee 17)[141]

> "Although we [non-heterosexual women] are not a minority, men have the advantage." (Interviewee 8)[142]

> "It is complicated to work with gay guys because I think they have a more visible trajectory than lesbians." (Interviewee 19)[143]

On the other side, in contrast, lesbians and bisexual women – to a major extent – are not visible.

> "And we question precisely about the spaces of activism, of collectivism, where the spaces for us [lesbians and bisexual women] are, right? And I didn't see room for me, for example." (Interviewee 14)[144]

Therefore, they feel a lack of representation in general; however, this issue of invisibility and spaces has two different faces. First, as I have stated in the last section, mixed spaces are controlled by other identities, as many participants shared.

> "In the [LGBTQ] spaces where I have been women do a lot, I mean a lot, but we are not recognised." (Interviewee 5)[145]

> "There is a need [for spaces for lesbians and bisexual women] because we are still not represented anywhere even though there is LGBT space, the system is still heterosexual." (Interviewee 2)[146]

[141] yo siempre le ofrezco el espacio a las lesbianas, porque aquí [comunidad LGBTQ]es de puros hombres
[142] A pesar de que no somos minoría [mujeres no heterosexuales] los hombres llevan ventaja.
[143] Es complicado trabajar con chicos gays, porque me parece que tienen una trayectoria más visible que las de las mujeres lesbianas
[144] Y cuestionamos precisamente de los espacios de activismos, de colectividad, de donde están los espacios para nosotras [lesbianas y mujeres bisexuales] ¿no? Y yo no veía espacio para mí, por ejemplo
[145] En los espacios en los que he estado las mujeres hacemos un montón, pero un montón, pero no se nos reconoce.
[146] Hay necesidad [de espacios para mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales] seguimos sin ser representadas en ningún lado a pesar de que haya lo LGBT el sistema a sigue siendo heterosexual.

Consequently, they do not have those spaces to be part of. Second, they feel that they need their own spaces, but those spaces are also sparse and thus the most common claim is the urgency for exclusive spaces for them, which I analyse in the following section.

> "The truth is that I don't know many lesbians' organisations in the city." (Interviewee 18)[147]

> "Spaces are needed, I am conflicted that spaces are not generated for lesbians, we are excluded, we are not invited, and it is said that we are problematic. We have been segregated from spaces." (Interviewee 8)[148]

The data gathered clearly shows the disadvantages that women have in accessing spaces in which they feel represented and visible. This is a consequence of the idea that women belong to the private sphere, that they do not belong to the public, while historically men have inhabited the public sphere. However, this false dichotomy of private/public spaces and gender (Valentine, 1993) only works to control and discipline bodies in line with heteropatriarchy, reproducing unequal power relations, in which women face more difficulties in inhabiting the public sphere, and in their attempts, they find different obstacles; one that is very common is the lack of legitimation as spaces for themselves, as their spaces are taken by others.

The case that we explored in the previous chapter in which the CEO of NGO D (advocated exclusively to lesbians) came under political pressure to address issues of the LGBTQ population in general, demonstrates that women are limited when it comes to having spaces for themselves, being pushed to share the spaces with others, and finding it more difficult to create exclusive spaces.

[147] La verdad es que no conozco muchas organizaciones de mujeres lesbianas en la ciudad.

[148] Se necesitan espacios, me conflictúa que no se generan espacios para mujeres lesbianas, se nos excluye no se nos convoca; y se dice que somos liosas. Se nos ha segregado de los espacios.

> "For that reason, our interest [her partner's and hers] was more focused on working with lesbians, but as Adriana [partner] was the coordinator at the time of the NGO D we had pressure to open a space for the LGBT population." (Interviewee 10)[149]

Thus, it is very common that men or heterosexual people attempt to colonise spaces that are for lesbians, thereby diluting the lesbian agenda. For example, in a lesbian NGO (D), the new CEO is a heterosexual woman and one worker said that she is not there to fight for lesbians' rights: "She is straight and lesbians does not matter to her" (Interviewee 5)[150]. This case is complex, given that while the decision making is done by a council that is comprised of LGBTQ people, some members are outside of the LGBTQ political movement and/or work in other organisations, as participants that belong to NGO A and D, that are run by that council, mentioned:

> "We thought it was easier to make the succession through a council, a general coordination where a group of people [mostly women] participated." (Interviewee 10)[151]

But they are in charge of making decisions about the paths of those organisations, such as choosing this heterosexual CEO, as Interviewee 11 mentioned: "It is a selection process by the council (there are seven of us)"[152]. Consequently, the interest and aims are not decided just by lesbians, which in some ways holds back the progress of both NGOs.

Besides, the other NGO (A) managed by the council, which is looking to visibilise lesbians and bisexual women (as well as other marginalised identities), is currently staffed by one gay man, one heterosexual woman and two lesbians.

[149] Pues por eso nuestro interés [su pareja y ella] estaba más centrado en el trabajo con las mujeres lesbianas, pero como Adriana [pareja] era la coordinadora en ese momento de la ONG D tuvimos una presión para que abriéramos un espacio para la población LGBT.

[150] Ella es heterosexual y las mujeres lesbianas no le importan.

[151] Pensábamos que era más fácil hacer la sucesión por medio de un consejo, una coordinación donde participáramos un conjunto de personas [la mayoría mujeres]

[152] Es un proceso de selección por parte del consejo (Somos 7)

> "Right now, the organisation is not composed of the LGBT population only; right now, there is a straight girl, but fine. For example with Raul, everything is fine too." (Interviewee 18)[153]

Consequently, when they have achieved the goal of having their own spaces it is not easy to keep them completely exclusive. But this does not occur only within the NGOs; in general, the physical and symbolic spaces are taken by men.

> "For example, there are agendas for lesbians and bisexual women that are made by men and it is like, 'Well, what happened there?' But well at least those agendas are already being discussed. It would have more impact for me if a lesbian or bisexual woman spoke of lesbian or bisexual agendas and not men." (Interviewee 14)[154]

However, this appropriation of spaces goes from the top of the hierarchy of the LGBTQ arena that was developed in the first empirical chapter regarding the way in which identities are prioritised, thus, passing by the different levels of the hierarchy, men invisibilising women in general, then trans women also taking spaces, as one lesbian interviewee expressed:

> "She is a trans woman, nobody wants to participate in those spaces because of her. For example, a space to speak with officials of the human rights commission and she has taken over that space." (Interviewee 18)[155]

But lesbians are also taking spaces from others, also being perpetrators of unequal power relations with other identities (Rudy, 2001). For example, my data demonstrates a perception that lesbians

[153] Ahorita la organización no está compuesta por población LGBT únicamente, ahorita está una chica heterosexual, pero bien. Por ejemplo, con Raúl, también todo bien

[154] Por ejemplo hay agendas que las hacen hombres y es como "bueeeno qué pasó ahí" agendas de mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales, pero bueno al menos ya se están hablando de esas agendas. Para mí tendría más impacto que una mujer lesbiana o bisexual hablara de las agendas lesbianas o bisexuales y no hombres.

[155] Es una mujer trans, nadie quiere participar en esos espacios por ella. Por ejemplo, a un espacio para hablar con funcionarios de la comisión de derechos humanos y ella se ha adueñado de ese espacio.

squeeze out trans men, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, and also invisibilise bisexual women within these spaces.

> "Because now I saw in training spaces that there are already many lesbians, they are already occupying spaces [while bisexual women are not]." (Interviewee 14)[156]

Consequently, on their different levels, lesbians and bisexual women are trying to find a way to create an identity and community throughout physical and symbolic spaces, looking for recognition and autonomy.

> "In feminist spaces, we talk about lesbians, in LBTI spaces we also talk about lesbians." (Interviewee 5)[157]

> "Actually, they [activities] are for women, and the aim of the space is that they are the protagonists, who participate and also they are the ones who facilitate [the activities]." (Interviewee 2)[158]

Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women face the necessity of building their own spaces for themselves, in which they can develop their agendas and matters. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that this struggle to have spaces is more a consequence of how the NGOs, and in general LGBTQ spaces, are embedded in dynamics that do not allow lesbians' and bisexual women's social demands to come to the surface, such as, for example, homonormativity, which privileges not only gender but also class and race (Binnie, 1995; Browne, 2006), as all entwined together.

[156] porque ahora veía en espacios de formación que sí ya hay muchas lesbianas, ya están ocupando espacios.
[157] En los espacios feministas hablamos de las lesbianas, en los espacios LBTI también hablamos de las lesbianas
[158] En realidad, son para mujeres y la intención del espacio es que esas mujeres sean las protagonistas, que seamos mujeres las que participen, y también que sean mujeres las que faciliten.

> "[Speaking of spaces within the NGO] for men no, they already have many spaces, they are everywhere and are the face of LGBT discourse and the pink market." (Interviewee 2)[159]

Consequently, the kind of spaces that lesbians and bisexual women are trying to build is beyond homonormative spaces that reproduce the practices of heteronormativity, to some extent, and therefore leave women at a disadvantage because of their gender, sexual orientation, class and race. Therefore, lesbians' and bisexual women's attempts to construct spaces are more related to the idea of queer heterotopias (Jones, 2009), which in my theoretical chapter refers to spaces that challenge the gender norms and class privileges of homonormative spaces, such as the LGBTQ arena in Mexico.

Building their own spaces

The previous section presented how lesbians and bisexual women belong to neither the LGBTQ movement nor the feminist movement, despite their existence and contribution to both. This imitates how patriarchal norms have relegated women historically in occidental society to private spheres, excluding them from public life and the dynamics of these spaces, despite the relevant role that they have played (Ortner, 1972). Consequently, women in the LGBTQ arena have felt the need to build their own spaces in which they do not feel excluded or invisibilised, that allows them to develop their agendas and programmes to make demands specific to lesbians and/or bisexual women.

This section is focused on exploring the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women regarding the process of the creation of NGOs dedicated exclusively to them. Thus, it will explain and analyse how the dynamics are constructed within the organisations, their programmes, actions and gender

[159] [Hablando de espacios dentro de la ONG] Para hombres no, ya tienes muchos espacios están en todos lados y son la cara del discurso LGBT y el mercado rosa.

dynamics, as well as the hindrances from the beginning of the organisations, and the barriers to achieve their objectives and to carry on the NGOs in general.

In the Mexican LGBTQ community, the necessity among lesbians and bisexual women to create their own spaces is evident; this demand looks more like a requirement than an opportunity or luxury for them. This is because within the LGBTQ arena in Mexico women, especially lesbians and bisexual women, tend to be excluded and invisibilised by the NGOs which are focused on LGBTQ issues. Activists are aware of this situation and some participants expressed bringing in different specifications regarding the exclusion:

> "Women are a minority; I even see that in social issues there are more gay men than women. Within the NGO we are four women out of 10-15, yes, there is a huge disparity and then you realise I feel that there is still not much visibility of women in the LGBT area." (Interviewee 16)[160]

Therefore, there exists a feeling of lack of visibility, not only from the general movement, but this feeling also exists among lesbians and bisexual women regarding other women in the movement. In other words, other women do not know they exist. In addition, their presence in LGBTQ organisations does not feel genuine; instead, they are considered only as a political move, as one of the participants mentioned:

> "Besides that, on the advisory board, I was there to cover the quota of a young lesbian. However, that did not imply that I had in there many opportunities to impact there" (Interviewee 5)[161]

[160] Las mujeres somos minoría, inclusive veo que en temas de acción social son más hombres gays qué mujeres. Dentro de la ONG somos cuatro mujeres de los 10 - 15, sí hay una disparidad enorme y entonces te das cuenta siento que todavía no hay mucha visibilidad de mujeres en el área LGBT.

[161] Además, eso, en el consejo consultivo yo estaba ahí de, como para cubrir la cuota de mujer joven lesbiana. pero no es que yo tuviera ahí muchos espacios de incidencia.

Thus, they are considered just as a piece of embellishment to make organisations look inclusive even if lesbians and bisexual women cannot work on their agendas, participate, or make demands on specific issues. Another concern about the necessity of spaces of their own is the lack of network among individuals to find other women to work together, as another participant expressed:

> "Yes, I would like to work with women; we tried at the beginning of the year by opening an information process, a process of self-recognition. But there was no response from the women, the call was closed." (Interviewee 3)[162]

This situation is related to the lack of recognition of themselves within the movement, which also is a consequence of the lack of belonging that I reviewed in the previous section. Hence, lesbians and bisexual women work on their own when they are part of LGBTQ NGOs. Nevertheless, they are conscious that they need their own spaces because they are not recognised in mixed associations.

> "And what is wrong is that women are invisible there [in the protest, in the movement] because they [gay men] have a lot of people, but they do not understand that women still need a space there, but they don't understand because they do not care." (Interviewee 12)[163]

All these circumstances together lead to lesbians and bisexual women looking for ways of developing their own spaces, in which they can work on their interests and agendas and generate networks among themselves to be able to visibilise their demands and rights. One of the most common resources that they have is exclusivity; this means that they do not want men there, because it enhances their invisibilisation, given that gay men are shaped also by patriarchal norms and this causes dislike and disapproval from men in the LGBTQ community, as different participants expressed.

[162] Sí me gustaría trabajar con mujeres, lo intentamos a inicio de año al abrir un proceso de información, un proceso de auto reconocimiento. Pero no hubo respuesta de las mujeres, se cerró la convocatoria.

[163] Y lo que está mal es que las mujeres son invisibles ahí [en la protesta, en el movimiento] porque ellos [hombres gais] tienen mucha gente, pero no entienden que las mujeres igual necesitamos un espacio ahí, pero no entienden porque no les interesa.

> "We had the first discussion about the composition of that coordinating council, but we established that the majority of the council had to be women and that generated great tension." (Interviewee 10)[164]

Therefore, the decision to decrease the percentage of men in the council of the NGO caused tension, even though they were not excluded from the council to make decisions about the rules and functions of the organisation. Likewise, another participant expresses that gay men were angry after being banned from a support group created by and for women.

> "… gay men who came to the Sunday [support] groups and the women asked [the organisers] to make them [the gay men] leave and I was very sorry. They got angry and left and I still think that in the end, it is okay for women to have exclusive spaces." (Interviewee 17)[165]

Thus, women have to fight and claim their own spaces to be able to visibilise and work on their own matters. As a consequence, to be able to develop these matters NGOs created by women tend to address only women's issues. "It started as a collective with workshops aimed only at women." (Interviewee 14)[166]. Moreover, lesbians' and bisexual women's NGOs look for debates and discussions among them to build programmes and agendas that are solid and help to reinforce those organisations, which tend to be very vulnerable.

> "In 2015 we did a '*comal*' of impact [event to talk about the political incidence of lesbians and bisexual women], but it was pure feminist collectives, and we did not obtain any results. So for 2016 [advocacy] was for lesbian human rights defenders on the specific issue of lesbians. So what we wanted was to make an agenda because the things that we do ourselves as lesbians do not come out. And then we don't know what we want. So

[164] Tuvimos la primera discusión alrededor de la composición de ese consejo coordinador, pero nosotros establecimos que la mayoría del Consejo Tenía que estar formado por mujeres y eso generó una gran tensión.

[165]… Hombres gais que venían a los grupos [de apoyo] del domingo y las mujeres pidieron [a las organizadoras] que se salieran [los hombres gais] y a mí me dio mucha pena. Ellos se enojaron y se fueron y sigo pensando que al final sí está bien que las mujeres tengan espacios exclusivos.

[166] Empezó como un colectivo con talleres dirigidos únicamente a mujeres.

> the result was: Strengthen the political participation of lesbians and bisexuals, in issues and agenda for them." (Interviewee 11)[167]

Therefore, unlike the women working in LGBTQ mixed NGOs, lesbians and bisexual women working in their own spaces are looking for alliances among themselves to develop a more solid movement of women in LGBTQ with NGOs that are lasting in the LGBTQ scene in Mexico. The majority of these NGOs are dedicated to women that belong to the LGBTQ community exclusively, as some CEOs and workers mentioned:

> "[The NGO] works primarily for the human rights of lesbian, bisexual and trans women. It started with lesbians, then bisexual, and then trans. But it is an inclusive group." (Interviewee 17)[168]

In this way, they are trying to balance the unequal gender dynamics in LGBTQ organisations, carrying out their programmes and agendas exclusively for themselves.

> "What I do in the association is basic work, classes, workshops, conferences, all about the sexual health of lesbians and bisexual women. I also do reading groups and now it is the use of sex toys. At the same time I manage to place the projects." (Interviewee 19)[169]

Thus, they work with topics that are also addressed in LGBTQ organisations, but here they adapt it for lesbians and bisexual women, going from micro-actions that are working face to face with women in workshops to larger scale actions, as another participant said.

---

[167] En 2015 hicimos un comal de incidencia [evento para hablar sobre la incidencia política de mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales], pero fue de puras colectivas feministas y no obtuvimos ningún resultado. Entonces para 2016 [el comal de incidencia] fue para lesbianas defensoras de derechos humanos en el tema específico de lesbianas. Entonces lo que queríamos era hacer una agenda de porque no salen las cosas que nos dedicamos a hacer nosotras como lesbianas. Y luego no sabemos qué queremos. Entonces el resultado fue: Fortalecer la participación política de lesbianas y bisexuales, en temas y agenda para ellas.

[168] [La ONG] Trabaja principalmente por los derechos humanos de las mujeres lesbianas, bisexuales, y Trans. Se empezó con lesbianas, luego bisexuales, y luego ya Trans. Pero es un grupo que es incluyente.

[169] Lo que hago en la asociación es trabajo de base, clases, talleres, conferencias, todo sobre salud sexual de mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales. También hago grupos de lectura y ahora es también el uso de juguetes sexuales. En lo que logro colocar los proyectos.

> "We are dedicated to the development of strategic human rights projects; also, here we can make a school for lesbians. We work with LGBT issues that can work with lesbians and bisexual women." (Interviewee 2)[170]

In addition to topics related exclusively to LGBTQ women, they address other topics that are related to identities, such as class, race, and bodies, which are relevant for women given the gender norms embedded in society and within the LGBTQ arena.

> "Because what we all do in the spaces is not only talk about lesbians and bisexuals, we talk about fat-shaming, for instance, and other matters. So, it is enjoyable, well, at least it works in that way in our space." (Interviewee 2)[171]

Therefore, the creation of NGOs dedicated exclusively to lesbians and bisexual women are helping to build their own spaces with their own needs, in other words non-heterosexual women working for non-heterosexual women, creating these associations.

> "Actually, they [activities] are for women, and the aim of the space is that they are the protagonists, who participate and also they are the ones who facilitate [the activities]." (Interviewee 2)[172]

Thus, the organisers are very clear that the spaces that are dedicated exclusively to women are highly essential to be able to visibilise their issues, agendas and needs, such as, for example, in mixed spaces or international spaces in which they only have access if they work on their agendas as a priority. As the CEO of a lesbian organisation explained:

> "But besides continuing to bet on women has been the best, a man will not come to tell me anything and that is great, that there is no man who comes to tell you 'no', there is

[170] Nos dedicamos al desarrollo de proyectos derechos humanos estratégicos, también de aquí podemos hacer una escuela para mujeres lesbianas. Trabajamos los temas de LGBT que pueda trabajar temas con mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales.
[171] Porque lo que hacemos en los espacios todos es no solo hablar de lesbianas y bisexuales, también hablamos de gordo fobia, de estas otras cosas. Entonces es rico, bueno al menos en nuestro espacio es así.
[172] En realidad, son para mujeres y la intención del espacio es que esas mujeres sean las protagonistas, que sean mujeres las que participen, y también que sean mujeres las que faciliten.

> no gay man that says 'no', then you can go to stand in a mixed space to say what you want for lesbians. And it doesn't have feminist women telling you what to do either, it's an exclusive space for lesbians." (Interviewee 11)[173]

Therefore, for lesbians and bisexual women activists, it offers better results – in comparison to their visibility within feminists and LGBTQ NGOs – to focus only on working on/with women, in spaces that are genuinely looking for access and opportunities in the LGBTQ arena, being visible for themselves, and especially strengthening their networks with other feminists, lesbians, and LGBTQ NGOs.

> "We work with the NGO D, a feminist NGO and an NGO that fights for women's rights in jail." (Interviewee 10)[174]

Thus, they are trying to prioritise the reinforcement of lesbians' and bisexual women's agenda within the LGBTQ arena, inside of institutionalisation and outside, in activism in general, because lesbians and bisexual women consider it important to strengthen the movement in all arenas. Consequently, they are looking for all the tools to build a solid movement in which they feel visible and that they belong broadly within the LGBTQ movement, independently of the NGOs. However, the process of construction of these exclusive spaces for lesbians and bisexual women in general in the LGBTQ movement and especially within NGOs has also different hindrances. Activists expressed three specific barriers to developing their own spaces. Lack of acceptance by the LGBTQ community was mentioned regarding the creation of spaces exclusively for women, and they relate to patriarchal dynamics in which women cannot be powerful.

[173] Pero además seguir apostando por las mujeres ha sido lo mejor, no va a llegar un hombre a decirme nada y eso es lo genial, que no hay ningún hombre que llegue a decirte que no, no hay ningún gay que diga no, entonces puedes ir a plantarte a un espacio mixto a decir lo que tú quieres para las lesbianas. Y tampoco tiene a mujeres feministas diciéndote que hacer, es un espacio exclusivo para lesbianas.

[174] Nosotros trabajamos con la ONG D, una ONG feminista y una ONG que lucha por derechos de mujeres en la cárcel.

> "Then I started to reach all spaces as NGO D, but everyone hated the organisation. And my conclusion was that they hate it not because they don't like what the NGO does, but it is more because the organisation and women there have power." (Interviewee 11)[175]

Thus, the first obstacle that they encounter is to be seen, to be visible and to have access to those spaces in which they are not legitimated, making it more difficult to build networks with other LGBTQ organisations. For instance, the lack of recognition that all the lesbian-feminist organisations have (Falquet, 2014; Malnis, 2019; Mogrovejo, 2010), in comparison to NGOs that are not separatist, as I discussed in the previous chapter regarding NGO A, demonstrates the backdrop that lesbian associations have.

The lesbian-feminist movement is an example of how lesbians and (sometimes) bisexual women attempt to build their own spaces instead of working in mixed associations, having an impact on their self-perception of the legitimation and strengthening of their spaces. Because having the possibility of running and leading their NGOs is perceived as legitimation and has more solid associations. This movement in Mexico is divided into two branches: the institutional and the non-institutional[176] lesbian-feminist movement.

> "The lesbian movement started as very Marxist, but later in the 80s, with the creation of NGOs, there was a great rupture of those that are and those that are not with the institutions. For example, there are the lesbian-feminists and the anarchists and on the

[175] Entonces yo empecé a llegar a todos los espacios como NGO D, pero todos odiaban la organización. Y mi resolución personal fue que la odian no porque no les guste lo que hacen, sino es nada más porque tienen poder.

[176] The distinction between institutional and non-institutional lesbo-feminist movement is done with basis of the way that they decide to look for funding and to register their associations as NGOs. Non-institutional movement does not have interest in registering their associations as NGOs or looking for funding from the state, while the institutional movement has its basis in the registration with the state and using funds also from the state.

> other hand, we are the ones who do political advocacy, more with the institutions." (Interviewee 5)[177]

Regardless, both are looking to visibilise and lend advocacy to women who have different political and practical means of achieving their aims. As I mentioned in the section discussing the lack of belonging to the feminist and LGBTQ movements. On one side the institutional branch is looking to work within the LGBTQ movement, through NGOs and using the state's tools to build bridges between civil society and the government (Alvarez, 1999). On the other side the non-institutional branch is looking for the creation of spaces outside the NGOs because they consider that NGOs are damaging the lesbian-feminist movement (Mogrovejo, 2010) and some activists identify more with this branch than the institutional one.

> "The lesbian leaders I listen to, for example from NGO A or NGO D, I listen to them and their speech does not make me feel represented. I think it has to do with the paths and the lines, but sometimes I think that I would like to do other things more autonomously outside the institutional framework [...] For example, I talked to a collective called 'lesboperras' [lesbian-bitches], that I really like and that transmits that autonomy to me." (Interviewee 14)[178]

Moreover, despite the existence of a feeling of admiration and respect from the activists that belong to the institutionalised branch towards the activists belonging to the non-institutional branch, as Interviewee 5 commented, "It seems valid to me that the lesbian movement is not everything in

[177] El movimiento lésbico empezó como muy marxista, pero después en los 80s con la creación de las ONG hay una gran ruptura de las que están y las que no están con las instituciones. Por ejemplo, están las lesbo-feminista y las anarquistas y por el otro lado estamos las que hacemos incidencia política, más con las instituciones.

[178] Las líderes lesbianas que escucho, por ejemplo, de la ONG A o la ONG D, yo las escucho y su discurso no me hace sentir representada. Yo creo que tiene que ver con los caminos y las líneas, pero yo a veces pienso que a mí me gustaría hacer otras cosas más de manera autónoma fuera de la institucionalidad [...] Por ejemplo, platicaba con una colectiva que se llama lesboperras, que me gusta mucho y que me transmite mucho esa autonomía.

NGOs"[179]. There is also a general feeling of disapproval from the autonomous groups to the institutionalised ones.

> "It happens to us with other organisations that are very positioned on the issue of lesbians [lesbian-feminists], especially lesbians who look down on us for using the word 'gay' for women, or for not saying that we are lesbians, or even for not saying if we are feminists or the organisation is feminist; I am a feminist but like many different feminisms. But it is not an organisation that can be named feminist because we do not go with a flag or a feminism, nor with a way of naming women who relate [affectively] to other women, right? We know it is political, but we are not going to force it to be political for them [those attending the workshops]." (Interviewee 2)[180]

> "In a very confidential comment, I am going to tell you that NGO D is highly criticised by lesbian-feminists [due to institutionalism]." (Interviewee 5)[181]

In addition to this feeling of rejection of lesbian activists working in the institutions, which is the second obstacle, the perception about autonomous organisations of lesbians is related to radical feminism and separatist branches, in which the only people allowed are lesbians, who reject bisexual women and trans women.

> "We started [activism] in a group of feminist lesbians who were anti-bisexual and anti-everything." (Interviewee 17)[182]

> "Lesbian feminists have become very transphobic, they have a super essentialist vibe." (Interviewee 5)[183]

---

[179] Me parece válido que el movimiento lésbico no sea todo en ONG

[180] Nos pasa con otras organizaciones que están como muy posicionadas en el tema de las lesbianas [lesbo-feministas] sobre todo las lesbianas que nos mal miran por usar la palabra gay en mujeres, o por no decir que somos lesbianas, o incluso por no decir si somos feministas o la organización es feminista; yo soy feminista pero como de muchos feminismos diferentes. Pero no es una organización que se pueda nombrar feminista porque no vamos con una bandera o un feminismo, y tampoco con una forma de nombrar a las mujeres que se relacionan [afectivamente] con otras mujeres ¿no? Sabemos que es político, pero no las vamos a obligar a que sea político para ellas [las asistentes a los talleres]

[181] En comentario muy confidencial te voy a decir que la ONG D es muy criticada por las lesbo-feministas [Debido a la institucionalidad]

[182] Empezamos [el activismo] en un grupo de lesbianas feministas que eran anti bisexuales y anti todo

[183] Las lesbofeministas se han vuelto muy transfóbicas, es que tienen un rollo súper esencialista

Therefore, this rejection from the non-institutionalised branch of lesbian feminism and discrimination based on dissidence (Card, 1990) does not help to strengthen the movement and the community, which is the principal aim.

> "There is a group of feminist lesbians, but for personal reasons, I was removed from the group. But from my point of view much is lost in creating community and the work of creating a political agenda is not done, which is what interests me the most, we do not agree on much but we can also collaborate."(Interviewee 3)[184]

Furthermore, the third barrier is that from the institutionalised branch, they recognise that it is difficult to find self-sufficiency (Jennings, 2018) and they highlight the romanticisation of the idea of the lesbian continuum (Rich, 1980), as one participant mentioned:

> "I believe that they obey a romanticised culture of the women that are feminist lesbians [outside the system] and everything is wonderful, we are going to fight against the heteropatriarchy." (Interviewee 12)[185]

Consequently, it is important to recognise that one of the failures of the creation of spaces exclusively for lesbians is their lack of acknowledgement about the hindrances of separatism, and their exclusionary and discriminatory policy to other non-heterosexual women causes breaks in the creation of community. One of the disagreements between institutionalised and non-institutionalised lesbian movements in Mexico is the way of accessing resources, which is another issue affecting the development of their agendas: "Another issue is that there is no funding for lesbians." (Interviewee 5)[186]

[184] Existe un grupo de lesbianas feministas, pero por cuestiones personales me sacaron del grupo. Pero desde mi punto de vista se pierden mucho en crear comunidad y no se hace el trabajo de crear agenda política que es el que a mí me interesa más, no congeniamos mucho pero también podemos colaborar.

[185] creo que obedecen una cultura romanizada de las morras de que somos mujeres lesbianas feministas [afuera del sistema] y todo es maravilloso, vamos a luchar contra el heteropatriarcado.

[186] También otro tema es que no hay financiación para lesbianas.

Therefore, without funding and resources, it is very difficult to develop their agendas and programmes and keep their own NGOs. Despite this set of barriers that lesbians and bisexual women face in creating their spaces and generating programmes and actions to achieve their goals regarding their agendas, they are looking for the appropriation of the development arena in Mexico as the first step of visibilisation and inclusion within these spaces. The next section develops the funding and resources issue broadly because it is an important factor in the (in)visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico.

Sponsors, funding and access to resources

NGOs in Mexico – and in general in the world – are supported through funding from different actors. There are only a few exceptions of NGOs which are self-supporting, but these are in the minority because as organisations registered by the state as non-profit associations they have to be careful of how to manage money and not make a profit, because of the moral norms of the third sector/women and work (Neysmith and Reitsma-Street, 2000; Nelson and England, 2002). Therefore, the majority of the NGOs in Mexico have to stick to the conditions of their sponsors, reflecting the argument of Kamat (2003) and Mirtaf (1997) who state that sponsors influence in a very direct form the paths and agendas of NGOs. In this section, I am going to review and analyse from the data gathered how the sponsors and funding have a direct relationship to how NGOs LGBTQ are hierarchised, how bodies are stratified, and how they reproduce specific gender dynamics that are unequal.

It is relevant to classify first the different sponsors that appeared in the data gathered because each one has a different financial solvency and interest in a different kind of organisation. The principal source of funding for the NGOs interviewed is federal public funding given by the state, then some private sponsors related to enterprises and their facilitators or their own organisations to fund NGOs,

and finally, international sponsors which could be also organisations or different governments, via their embassies to be specific. Thus, the funding comes from diverse sponsors, which have different interests and aims.

Therefore, how sponsors distribute the funding and how they prioritise is related to social dynamics embedded in society in general, in which gender dynamics and homonormativity play a fundamental role (Williams and Giuffre, 2011), this situation is a key finding for my research and it will be discussed in more length later, in the following chapter. The development arena is still constrained and shaped by heteropatriarchal norms in which bodies, agendas and programmes that fit within these norms have more access to funding and resources from the donors and sponsors.

First, it is important to contextualise the situation in Mexico regarding sponsors. The culture of philanthropy and donations does not exist; thus, it is difficult to find organisations in general, and all the more so for LGBTQ NGOs. In consequence, the few philanthropists and charities are from the highest social class in Mexico, the majority of which are conservative, according to the CEO of NGO H:

> "In that aspect [alliances and support] are still very incipient because philanthropy is not very strong in Mexico, the culture of people giving to a charity. In addition, the higher class the sphere, the more conservative it is, and then the NGOs that raise many funds are very conservative. So, the issue of LGBT philanthropy is stuck." (Interviewee 1)[187]

Hence, in general, all the LGBTQ NGOs struggle to find support from sponsors in comparison with their heterosexual counterparts in the same spaces of activism, such as the digital one, as the same activist claimed:

[187] En ese aspecto aún está muy verde porque la filantropía no es muy fuerte en México. la cultura de que las personas no donen a una caridad. Además, mientras más alta es la esfera más conservadora es, entonces las ONG s que recaudan muchos fondos son de corte muy conservador. Entonces el tema de filantropía LGBT está muy parado.

> "But with the issue of funds and sponsorships, it was very complex because they had many questions and concerns regarding youtubers, so it was not so easy for them to sponsor a gay or a trans [youtuber]." (Interviewee 1)[188]

For activists of the LGBTQ arena in Mexico it is a fact that they have less access to sponsorship in comparison to the NGOs that work with topics that do not challenge heteropatriarchal norms. Given that, LGBTQ NGOs find refuge in international sponsors and donors to have access to resources for their programmes and agendas, as the CEO of NGO L said:

> "Unfortunately, NGO L has not found very large financing in Mexico. All our funding that deserves to be mentioned has always been from foreign countries such as the United States Embassy [...] In part from other countries, we have always received support from the Netherlands Embassy and a German organisation, and right now we are receiving funding from the Embassy of Israel." (Interviewee 9)[189]

Thus, countries and organisations from outside of Mexico are the ones funding the LGBTQ NGOs in the country. In addition to the international sponsors, these two NGOs that are advocated to the LGBTQ population in general, also have access to funding from private enterprises.

> "But we have had support from Larousse, Cabify, Doritos, Absolut and American Eagle." (Interviewee 1)[190]

Therefore, with the information given by these CEOs, it is known that LGBTQ organisations struggle to obtain funding for their different agendas and programmes and they have to look for a different alternative to carry on their projects. Regarding private funding, it is important to highlight that LGBTQ NGOs (dominated by gay men) are the ones that receive disproportionate funding from

[188] Pero con el tema de los fondos y patrocinios fue muy complejo porque para los youtubers tenían muchas dudas, entonces no era tan fácil que patrocinaran a un gay o una trans [youtuber].

[189] Desgraciadamente NGO L no ha encontrado un financiamiento muy grande en México. Todo nuestro financiamiento que merece ser mencionado siempre ha sido de países extranjeros por ejemplo la Embajada de Estados Unidos [...] En parte de otros países, siempre hemos recibido apoyo de la embajada de Países Bajos y de una organización alemana, y ahorita estamos recibiendo financiamiento de la embajada de Israel.

[190] Pero hemos tenido apoyos de Larousse, de Cabify, Doritos, Absolut, American Eagle.

private enterprises. This highlights two different points: on one side it reinforces the perception that Interviewee 2 expressed in saying that gay men have taken over the pink market/economy; this feeling is a general feeling in the perception of the activists. On the other hand, this feeling is related to gender assumptions that link femininity-generosity/masculinity-greed (Aslaksen, 2002), in which it is more socially accepted that men sell their services for money, while women are more linked to volunteering (Hardill and Baines, 2003).

Consequently, the access to grants and support from the donors is limited and is unequal for all the LGBTQ NGOs in different levels, creating a hierarchy of funding priority. The hierarchy is built on the agendas and matters that the NGOs are focused on. Therefore, the agenda of each NGO shapes their possibilities of being funded in their projects, to what extent and by whom (Alvarez, 1998).

HIV/AIDS

The most visible, even hypervisible, issue is HIV and AIDS, and this is a consequence of the worldwide crisis in the 1980s-1990s, which also impacted in Mexico (Mogrovejo, 2011; Valencia, 2015). However, nowadays funding (including private and public) is still related to this matter and its key populations, which are gay men and trans women. In Mexico, a specific governmental body is advocated to treating and sponsoring everything related to the HIV and AIDS, from campaigns of prevention to free medical treatment and attention to all the population who carry the virus. The centre is called the National Centre for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS (CENSIDA) and is part of the health ministry. It funds a number of NGOs that are called LGBTQ but whose advocacy is exclusively for the HIV/AIDS, as NGO A, and its CEO described:

> "In general, we have concentrated our funding on CENSIDA, which provides financing for projects that are for the key population, for gay men. They seek to finance especially

> populations that they call 'key' that biologically are the most likely to acquire HIV." (Interviewee 13)[191]

Activists, CEOs and in general the community within this arena know that the topic of HIV/AIDS will open opportunities for funding, as some interviewees said:

> "So in the case of HIV, it is bigger [the budget and the chances of getting the fund], because it is more attractive." (Interviewee 15)[192]

> "Because I see that LGBT organisations that work on HIV and are coordinated by men are the ones with money. They have much more resources." (Interviewee 18)[193]

Therefore, it is well known that agendas and projects linked to this matter are going to bring more funding, which is focused on gay men, not entirely but in its majority, followed by trans women. The situation not only regards public funding from the state; international organisations also reproduce this preference.

> "The UN Population Fund financed us for HIV prevention in secondary schools." (Interviewee 13)[194]

Consequently, LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico know well that it is easier to get funding if they are advocated to HIV/AIDS, focusing on the key populations and their needs, as one interviewee claimed:

> "I analysed: why do the organisations only work with men? Because working with them is the path to obtain funding. Because CENSIDA gives them money to apply HIV tests to the key population." (Interviewee 12)[195]

---

[191] En general, hemos concentrado nuestra financiación en Censida, que proporciona financiación para proyectos que son para población clave, para hombres homosexuales. Buscan financiar especialmente a las poblaciones que llaman "clave" y que biológicamente tienen más probabilidades de contraer el VIH.

[192] Entonces en el caso de VIH es más grande [el presupuesto y las probabilidades de obtener el fondo], porque es más atractivo.

[193] Porque yo veo que las organizaciones LGBT que trabajan VIH y son coordinadas por hombres, son las que tienen dinero. Ellos tienen muchos más recursos

[194] El fondo de población de la ONU nos financió para la prevención del VIH en las escuelas secundarias.

[195] Analicé: ¿por qué las organizaciones solo trabajan con hombres? Porque trabajar con ellos es el camino para obtener financiación. Porque CENSIDA les da dinero para aplicar pruebas de VIH a la población clave.

The materialisation of outcomes (tangible results)

The next group of issues prioritised in line with the hierarchy and considered to be more 'saleable' are the ones which involve all the LGBTQ population, 'general' agendas, in other words**.** For instance, the creation of databases along with surveys done by different NGOs such as NGO D and L. These surveys and data bases are asking about the life conditions of trans women, lesbians and/or gay men; helping to generate investigation about the needs and experiences of the LGBTQ population in Mexico with short term results, as some of the activists mentioned:

> "A survey is also going to be done this year to make a comparison and that is an investigation that we have to carry out later this year. The application [of the survey] will be done on the Pride protest because there is where more LGBT people are concentrated. We want to reach 1300 people at least." (Interviewee 2)[196]

> "Our most important project after we were a civil association was the National Discrimination Survey. This survey had not been developed before." (Interviewee 9)[197]

> "For example, in research, the most important project right now is a national diagnosis [of life quality] of LGBT people. It is an investigation that began in 2015 and has taken 23 years of survey application." (interviewee 18)[198]

Therefore, sponsors look for topics that have an impact on statistics or have a result that they can see. In addition to the databases, there are other topics such as fighting against conversion therapies, which is the main aim of NGO L, which is trying to pass a legislation to forbid these practices that are against human rights; as one of the CEOs shared.

[196] También se va a hacer una encuesta este año Para hacer un comparativo y esa es una investigación que tenemos que sacar a finales de este año. La aplicación [de la encuesta] se va a hacer en la marcha porque cuando se concentran más gente LGBT queremos llegar a 1300 personas al menos

[197] Nuestro proyecto más importante después de que fuimos asociación civil fue la encuesta Nacional sobre discriminación esta encuesta no se había desarrollado anteriormente

[198] Por ejemplo, en investigación, el proyecto más importante ahorita es un diagnóstico [de calidad de vida] nacional de personas LGBT. Es una investigación que empezó en 2015 y que ha llevado 23 años de aplicación de encuesta

> "From there we started working on the issue of Ecosig [conversion therapies] a year ago we launched a campaign [...] This has been a very important campaign because we achieved that the CNDH [Human Rights Commission], the Secretary of Health, and the Government through CONAPRED [National Council to Prevent Discrimination] positioned and declared this type of conversion therapy illegal." (Interviewee 9)[199]

Hence, donors and sponsors, both public and private, are interested in projects and programmes that generate tangible and short-term data and information, such as laws and indexes, as the same participant mentioned:

> "That is what donors are interested in, generating indexes or indicators, if that is not generated they are not very interested, they want to finance tangible products." (Interviewee 9)[200].

These matters are encompassed in the second level of the hierarchy, which is very general and do not exclude any identity from the LGBTQ community and it seems that donors and sponsors are very interested in them.

Sexual/reproductive rights

The following issue is not exclusive of the LGBTQ community. However, NGOs and sponsors are financing it. Sexual health is directly related to HIV/AIDS and abortion, thus sexual and reproductive rights in the majority of NGOs in Mexico are organised together, under the umbrella of sexual rights, which are considerably more complex than abortion and HIV/AIDS, as the Yogyakarta Principles (2009) states.

[199]Empezamos a trabajar el tema de los Ecosig (terapias de conversión) hace un año lanzamos una campaña [...] Este ha sido una campaña muy importante porque logramos que los CNDH, la secretaría de salud, y el gobierno por medio de CONAPRED se posicionaran y declararon ilegales este tipo de terapias de conversión.

[200] Eso es lo que les interesa a los donantes, que se generen índices indicadores si no se genera eso no le entran mucho quieren encontrar productos tangibles.

> "For the last 2 years I have done workshops with a focus on gender, [...] sexual and reproductive rights, and I talk about violence in romantic relationships and violence in general. I have also done workshops on gender diversity, [...] and for the last year I have been doing workshops about the rights of LGBT people, only lesbian, bisexual, and trans people." (Interviewee 3)[201]

Thus, the funding is offered for all sexual rights in general, and the organisations have to work with what they have, as one interviewee expressed:

> "INMUJERES [National institute of Women] for example now gave a line of financing to young people and prevention of teenage pregnancy [...] the work [of the NGO] is with gay men, trans women. Let's say what we have worked on the most is people with disabilities and gay men. The activities, courses and workshops have always worked for sexual diversity, for their visibility, in general." (Interviewee 13)[202]

Other activity that is commonly funded is the workshops about sexual health in schools or for targeted populations, such as LGBTQ people in jail, which is one of the main aims of NGO G. Therefore, the funding for sexual rights is given to NGOs regardless of the specific community, showing that gender mainstreaming practices are prioritised by the sponsors (Alvarez, 1998). In other words, even though the funding could be for any part of the community they prioritise HIV programmes, as I analysed, or programmes related to reproductive bodies. In consequence, communities that are not the key population of HIV/AIDS or are not deemed reproductive bodies are not the target of the sponsors; this includes to some extent, lesbians and bisexual women, as some participant expressed the exclusion.

[201] Desde hace 2 años doy talleres con enfoque de género [...], de derechos sexuales y reproductivos, también trató violencia en el noviazgo y violencia en general, trato diversidad de género [...], y desde hace un año trato derechos de personas lgbt como únicamente lesbianas, bisexuales, y trans.

[202] El trabajo [de la ONG] es con hombres gay, mujeres Trans. Digamos en lo que más hemos trabajado es personas con discapacidad y hombres gay. Las actividades, cursos y talleres siempre han trabajado por la diversidad sexual, por su visibilisación, en general. INMUJERES por ejemplo ahora dio línea de financiamiento a jóvenes y la prevención a embarazo adolescente.

> "At the time they [CENSIDA] financed us the [project] of lesbians and bisexual women, but not because it is only a vulnerable population, not key. For women, they [CENSIDA and similar NGOS] finance women in pregnancy and women with HIV." (Interviewee 13)[203]

> "The budget focuses on maternal mortality; however, it is very clear that public policy will not be focused on non-heterosexual women, even as a line of action, we are not within the lines of human rights, we are not in the women's institute, we do not exist for the government." (Interviewee 3)[204]

Lesbian/bisexual agenda

Thus, the issues that are at the bottom of this hierarchy of issues are the ones related to lesbians and bisexual women, which are not considered as an important target for the sponsors, therefore they are invisibilised (Alvarez, 1998). Several interviewees that belong to this community experienced this exclusion:

> "We never managed to do something for lesbians and bisexual women; I started to make pamphlets on the sexual health of lesbians and bisexual women. But it was not printed. I had to request support from the CNDH [Human Rights Commission], and they told me that there were no resources and I tried to move it on several sides to be printed, but then I ended up feeling very lonely and said to myself: no longer, stop." (Interviewee 19)[205]

[203] En su momento ellos [CENSIDA] nos financiaron el [proyecto] de mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales, pero ya no porque sólo es una población vulnerable, no clave. A mujeres financian mujeres en el embarazo o con VIH.

[204] El presupuesto se centra en la mortalidad materna, sin embargo, es muy claro que la política pública no va a ir centrada hacia mujeres no heterosexuales, ni siquiera como una línea de acción, no estamos dentro de las líneas de Derechos Humanos, no estamos en el instituto de las mujeres, no existimos para el gobierno.

[205] Nunca logramos hacer algo para mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales, yo empecé a hacer folletos sobre salud sexual de mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales. pero no se imprimió. Tuve que solicitar apoyo de la CNDH, y me dijeron que no había recursos e intenté moverlo por varios lados para que se imprimiera, pero pues acabé sintiéndome muy sola y dije no ya detente

Therefore, not even the institutions that are dedicated to human rights matters have funding to support projects of lesbians and bisexual women. In addition, it seems that the longevity or experience of the NGOs to apply for funding is not an advantage either, as other participants mentioned.

> "Now I am applying projects for financing and so I have applied for 5 years. But they have not been successful, but then to keep trying. Yes, it is very difficult to pitch projects because for the government we [lesbians] are not on the agenda because we are not involved in the hegemonic of heterosexuality, and when the associations work on these issues [about non-heterosexual women] they do it in secret because if not the donors take away the resources." (Interviewee 19)[206]

Hence, for lesbians and bisexual women, there is no funding for their projects because they are invisibilised and it does not matter if they have been looking for the funding for one year or have been working for 25 years, as one interviewee mentioned about one NGO:

> "Because being able to have the structure to obtain resources on the issue of non-heterosexual women is very complicated; the most important NGO on lesbian issues has been around for 25 years and the reality is that they do not always have resources to do the job." (Interviewee 3)[207]

Thus, lesbians and bisexual women have less access to resources in comparison to their counterpart gay men working in the same arena, although both are looking for their agendas regarding rights to LGBTQ. The majority of the participants share this feeling.

> "Yes, there is a difference between getting resources for gay men than for lesbians and bisexual women. If you get federal resources, that are part of the government, lesbians

[206] Y pues ahorita estoy aplicando proyectos para financiamiento y así he aplicado desde hace 5 años. pero no han tenido éxito, pero pues a seguir intentado. Sí es muy difícil meter proyectos porque para gobierno no estamos en agenda [lesbianas], porque no estamos metidas en lo hegemónico de la heterosexualidad, y cuando las asociaciones trabajan estos temas [Mujeres no heterosexuales] lo hacen a escondidas porque si no los donantes les quitan los recursos.

[207] porque poder tener la estructura para obtener recursos en el tema de mujeres no heterosexuales es muy complicado, la ONG más importante en temas de mujeres lesbianas lleva 25 años y la realidad es que no siempre tienen recursos para hacer el trabajo.

> and bisexual women we are not considered in any line of action, neither artistic, cultural, health, nor anything." (Interviewee 12)[208]

> "Yes, I think that there are more opportunities for men, in general, they do have more opportunity than women, and they have a greater recognition of the work they do [activism]." (Interviewee 3)[209]

Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women are excluded from sponsors' funding in comparison to men. However, as I mentioned previously in this chapter, this community is also excluded from funding for heterosexual women.

> "Regarding projects, what she [the CEO] told me was the expert in projects, she told me that if we pitch projects for lesbians and bisexual women, they were not going to give us funding, it had to be for women with a gender perspective." (Interviewee 19)[210]

Thus, if lesbians and bisexual women want to fight for their agendas within NGOs that are not advocated exclusively to lesbians and bisexual women's matters they face barriers to doing so, because if they try, they could lose the opportunity of being funded, or they have to disguise their agendas, as one participant claimed:

> "If they have got lesbians and bisexual women [funds] it was because they know how to adapt and accommodate them, and they are accepted. It is because they are not considered, we do not exist, we are not even political rewards, we are so nothing that we are not even political rewards." (Interviewee 12)[211]

---

[208] Sí hay una diferencia entre bajar recursos para hombres gays que para mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales. Si bajas recursos federales, que sean parte del gobierno, las mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales no estamos consideradas en ninguna línea, ni cultural artística, salud ni nada.

[209] Sí, creo que sí se abren más oportunidades para los hombres, en general sí tienen más oportunidad que las mujeres, y tienen mayor reconocimiento sobre el trabajo que hacen [activismo].

[210] Con respecto a meter proyectos lo que me decía ella [la directora] que era la experta en meter proyectos, me decía que si metíamos proyectos para mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales no nos iban a dar el financiamiento tenía que ser para mujeres con perspectiva de género

[211] Si han conseguido mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales [fondos] ha sido porque saben cómo adaptarlos y acomodarlos, y así son aceptados. Es justo porque no están considerados, no existimos, ni siquiera somos un botín político, somos tan nada que ni siquiera somos botín político.

For instance, another interviewee claimed that indeed they look for funding for women in general because funding for lesbians does not exist:

> "Just for being at the intersection between feminists and LGBT, we have programmes with INMUJERES [National Women's Institute], we pitch projects for women, our financing is public." (Interviewee 5)[212]

Thus, the opportunities to develop their agendas are very scarce, because the funding, in general, is not for them; they have to disguise their projects or if there are one or two opportunities, they are very competitive as a consequence of this lack of support, as one lesbian activist mentioned:

> "I was told that at the federal level there are no resources or government programmes for lesbians and bisexual women. There are international foundations that do stipulate projects for lesbians and bisexual women [...] and although there is access to it is an international competition; it is difficult to get projects from there." (Interviewee 19)[213]

Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women do not have paths to build and develop their spaces and programmes, and fight for their own demands. However, this issue of funding relies on the donors and sponsors instead of on LGBTQ NGOs that are not interested in putting forward their agenda because there is no funding for that, provoking a circular problem. The lack of flexibility of the sponsors and donors is an important matter that was brought up several times by the interviewees, both men and women:

> "It seems to me that we have to be expanding our possibilities to adapt to the calls that come out, that is, the resources of NGO A have been obtained in response to calls that are published by the government towards certain projects. [...] every year we have to be

[212] Nosotras justo por estar en la intersección entre los Feminista y LGBT, tenemos programas con INMUJERES [Instituto nacional de las mujeres], aplicamos en los proyectos para mujeres, nuestro financiamiento es público.

[213] Me dijeron que a nivel federal no hay recursos o programas de gobierno para mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales. Hay fundaciones internacionales que ellos si estipulan proyectos para mujeres, lesbianas bisexuales y mujeres Trans, y la única coa que piden es que seas menor de 30 años. Y aunque si hay acceso es una competencia a nivel internacional, esta canija conseguir proyectos desde ahí.

> developing projects according to the calls that come out and then we more or less adjust our perspective." (Interviewee 10)[214]

Thus, different CEOs from different NGOs affirm that they have to shape their agendas to have access to the funding given by the different sponsors, public and private, despite their lines of action or if they have priorities regarding agendas or geographic spaces to act.

> "So they [sponsors] already have their lines and it sounds ugly but we have had to adjust the agenda, even to adjust the states of the republic where that issue has to be developed." (Interviewee 9)[215]

Hence, they have to fit the interest of the sponsors instead of following the needs that they have as NGO, and the specific interests of the sponsors are also permeated by gender dynamics in which women have less opportunity, as the CEO claimed:

> "We have 10 girls and the donor says, 'It is not feasible because there are not more than 30 girls, there is no cost-benefit,' and we made the money more efficient so that those girls could also be included in the budget for men."[216] (Interviewee 7[217])

Therefore, sponsors and donors are one of the causes that trigger the lack of support and funding for NGOs dedicated to lesbians and bisexual women, or lack of support directly in agendas for them within LGBTQ and women's NGOs. Consequently, the majority of NGOs advocated exclusively to lesbians and/or bisexual women tend to look for self-management, to be sustainable over the years,

[214] Me parece que nosotros tenemos que estar ampliando nuestras posibilidades de adaptarnos a las convocatorias que salen, es decir, los recursos de la ONG A han sido obtenido por respuesta a convocatorias que se publican por parte del gobierno hacia ciertos proyectos. [...]todos los años nosotros tenemos que estar desarrollando proyectos de acuerdo a las convocatorias que salen y Entonces nosotros más o menos ajustamos nuestra perspectiva

[215] Entonces ellos [Patrocinadores] ya tienen como sus líneas y suena feo, pero sí hemos tenido que ajustar la agenda, incluso de ajustar los estados de la república en donde se tenga que desarrollar ese tema.

[216] Tenemos 10 chavas y el donante dice "no es factible porque no son más de 30, no da el costo beneficio" y nosotros eficientamos el dinero para que en el presupuesto destinado a hombres también se puedan incluir las chicas.

[217] Interviewee 7 is a gay man, CEO of NGO G, who is advocated to work with vulnerable communities in prison.

despite invisibilisation from donors and sponsors regarding the funding, as some participants have experienced:

> "The next year we went back to work with NGO J and there we made a fanzine, all this was self-managed." (Interviewee 3)[218]

Therefore, people working in LGBTQ organisations have to get used to the lack of funding, and in consequence, they often lose interest in working there, because there is no opportunity to continue programmes, or they have to pay for it and to do that they need to have another job.

> "I've been in that association for 15 years [LGBTQ], but it has always been self-managed. I don't do it full time anymore because there were no funds for women, no resources were sought, so it was exhausting and I left for a while." (Interviewee 19)[219]

While there is fatigue among some activists there are others that try to find networks within associations or been supported in some way by governmental bodies or international foundations. However, the constant is that they have to self-support the majority of their work focused on non-heterosexual women.

> "Most of our funding is by the Federal Government, we suddenly have some support for international work, but they are very specific things like trips or things like that, but that is not from cooperation agencies, but they are other organisations or foundations." (Interviewee 10)[220]

> "Everything was done with internal and/or own resources and collaborations or exchanges with other organisations, there were no external resources. Yes, there was a

[218] El siguiente año entramos de nuevo a trabajar con la ONG J y ahí hicimos un fanzine, todo esto era auto gestionado

[219] Llevo 15 año en esa asociación [LGBTQ], pero siempre ha sido auto gestionado. No lo hago ya de tiempo completo porque no había fondos para mujeres, no se buscaba bajar recursos, entonces fue agotador y me salí un rato.

[220] La mayoría de nuestros financiamientos por el Gobierno Federal, de pronto tenemos algún apoyo para el trabajo internacional, pero son cosas muy puntuales como viajes o cosas así, pero que tampoco es de agencias de cooperación, sino que son otras organizaciones o fundaciones.

> lot of collaboration [with INMUJERES] and the facilitated places to do workshops, but there was no pay." (Interviewee 14)[221]

Consequently, the neoliberal dynamics within which the sponsors are obviously embedded, are a backdrop for the LGBTQ NGOs and movement (Ward, 2008). Thus, this lack of access to funding also affects their labour rights, because without resources it is very difficult to have labour rights or stable wages, as two different participants stated:

> "I think that we have not been good as an organisation in the search for financing, that is, we do not have financing that guarantees institutional work, wages, income, all that." (Interviewee 10)[222]

> "It is a challenge because, in some way, having people's social security is very expensive, especially with the budget of lesbian NGOs, or directed by lesbians, especially." (Interviewee 2)[223]

Therefore, as a way of survival, or in the attempt to have enough money to develop their NGOs carrying on their own projects or agendas, they are looking for solutions to generate resources, such as selling work for the community, as the CEO of NGO J expressed:

> "We have not managed to stay without financing, right now what we are trying to do is sell workshops. In the support group cooperation is requested, but it is very, very symbolic. It has cost us a lot of work that the community understands that it has to pay for the services it receives." (Interviewee 17)[224]

[221] Todo se hizo con recursos internos y/o propios y colaboraciones o trueques con otras organizaciones, no hubo recursos externos. Sí había mucha colaboración (con INMUJERES) y lugares para hacerlo, pero no había paga.

[222] Creo que nosotros no hemos sido buenos como organización en la búsqueda de financiamientos, es decir, no tenemos financiamientos que nos garanticen el trabajo institucional, los salarios, la renta todo eso.

[223] Es un reto pues, en sí tener de alguna forma la seguridad social de las personas, es muy caro, en especial con el presupuesto de las ONG de lesbianas, o dirigidas por lesbianas, especialmente.

[224] No hemos logrado mantenernos sin financiamiento, ahorita lo que estamos intentando es vender talleres. En el grupo de apoyo se pide una cooperación, pero es muy, muy simbólica. nos ha costado mucho trabajo que la comunidad entienda que tiene que pagar por los servicios que recibe

Thus, women activists are looking for different solutions to self-fund their NGOs; however, other gender issues are embedded within this conception of who can sell services. As I developed in the first empirical chapter, women tend to be more judged regarding selling their work related to care and human rights, in which men are not challenged about selling their work. In addition, lesbians and bisexual women struggle with funding because of the romanticisation of work, adding another layer of difficulties to get funds and donors, which was also developed in the previous empirical chapter which detailed the gendered obligation of how work is presumed as an act of love related with femininity. Consequently, women NGOs tend to be perceived as spaces in which all their work is an act of love that does not need funding to carry it out (Hardill and Baines, 2003). Thus, the perception of women as workers by nature or because of their gender is holding back their opportunities to be funded and to develop their NGOs with their agendas to build their own space in the LGBTQ arena in Mexico.

Conclusion

The LGBTQ movement in Mexico has been developed under the same heteropatriarchal and neoliberal norms that rule Mexican society in general. This situation means that lesbians and bisexual women are excluded and invisibilised both generally and within the arena of sexuality politics, despite their active participation in constructing the demands and fight for rights in the LGBTQ and feminist movements. Thus, lesbians and bisexual women feel that they do not belong to these spaces and it is difficult to find points in which their exclusive agendas overlap with the agendas of other LGBTQ associations. Consequently, they seek to create their own spaces, physically and symbolically, to be able to raise their own agendas and matters, raising their voices to have access to their specific agendas and rights. This works as an alternative path to avoiding the invisibilisation that they experience in

mixed LGBTQ spaces. Hence, lesbians and bisexual women create their own NGOs to formulate their agendas and express their demands. However, they encounter a barrier to funding, because sponsors, which are the main source of resources for NGOs, are not interested in funding issues of non-heterosexual women, as these bodies are deprioritised as they are deemed non-reproductive and low-risk in relation to HIV/AIDS.

Finding donors and funds for LGBTQ NGOs is a challenge in Mexico. However, it gets more complex when the funding is for issues that are not related to HIV/AIDS in the case of LGBTQ and, in the case of feminist/ reproductive rights, it is more complex to get funding if it is not for abortion-related projects. Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women have to self-support their programmes and agendas, because they have little access to external support, holding back the capacity, scope and sustainability of their projects. In addition, these women face the gender assumption that women work as an act of love, and that women selling services related to the defence of human rights, is judged negatively by other activists, specifically the ones that consider work as exploitation, and donors. Consequently, sponsors do not consider women's projects to be worth funding, and this is one of the most important hindrances for lesbians and bisexual women in creating their spaces. Thus, practical matters such as access to spaces and resources are the material reasons which hold back lesbians and bisexual women from being visible in the LGBTQ sphere in Mexico. However, it is important to highlight that these specific situations are embedded in heteropatriarchal norms, or in other words, the institutionalisation of phallocentricity, which is reproduced by sponsors, gay men and heterosexual women, respectively, causing the exclusion of lesbians and bisexual agendas of LGBTQ NGOs. Now, I will turn, in the next chapter, to a fuller discussion of the issues covered in chapters four and five. There, I will develop my key findings as well as present some normative ideas on how lesbians and bisexual women can help to overcome their invisibilisation.

CHAPTER SIX
Discussion of findings: The flawed spaces for lesbians and bisexual women & new alternatives.

Introduction

Throughout this thesis, I have emphasised that despite the assumption that within the LGBTQ realm exists a commitment to issues of gender and inequality, the way in which gender dynamics are negotiated tend to be unequal, in a similar way as in wider cis-heteropatriarchal society. In other words, wider gender stereotypes are (re)produced within the LGBTQ realm. For example, in terms of moral norms, the legitimation of certain romantic/sexual relationships, as well as the appropriation of physical and symbolic spaces, are valued and performed differently depending on gender identity. Consequently, my empirical work highlights that the LGBTQ arena is permeated and shaped by homonormative practices, which imply a set of hierarchies in relation to LGBTQ identities, the priorities of each association, and the relationships that exist between the NGOs themselves. It is crucial to highlight that the factors organising these elements are related to wider power dynamics exterior to the LGBTQ field – such as the activities of sponsors and donors that belong to

international authorities linked to ID and the neoliberal interests of the market. It is well documented that these factors shape the norms of society in general.

One of the most common effects of inequality within LGBTQ NGOs and the hierarchisation of identities is the ghettoisation of the most vulnerable groups/identities that belong to this domain, specifically lesbians and bisexual women. However, as I pointed out in previous chapters, separationist strategies as a measure to enhance visibilisation, as well as a measure to help the autonomy of women, tend to fail (Card, 1990; Rudy, 2001; Jennings, 2018). This unsuccessful situation brings us to (RQ3) Why are lesbians and bisexual women marginalised, invisibilised and ghettoised in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico? From that broader question, three additional sub-questions emerge, which I will address in this chapter:

(i) What factors affect lesbians' and bisexual women's access to spaces?

(ii) Why do specific spaces not work as a tool of visibilisation and inclusion to the LGBTQ field (including funding)?

(iii) To what extent do other means exist to enhance the visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women within the LGBTQ arena?

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss these three questions in light of the data gathered and the theory presented in previous chapters. To that end, I show the different factors that shape and have an effect on the gender dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, taking into account how homonormative practices and phallocentricity shape the visibility and hierarchy of LGBTQ identities, affecting their access to resources and spaces and causing the ghettoisation of lesbians and bisexual women. This situation results in a perception of failure amongst these women on the basis that their aims are not being fulfilled, and can also help to account for the low numbers of NGOs advocating exclusively lesbians' and bisexual women's agendas. The factors that embody this marginalisation run

deep and are related to wider neoliberal dynamics and gender norms that have pervaded the international development industry. It follows that lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ in Mexico must use the different tools they have at their disposal and the circumstances they face, in pursuit of their own interests, given that they are not perceived as a target group – as either possessing a body interested on/capable of reproduction or at risk of HIV/AIDS. Thus, they should look to other means that are outside the fixed stereotypes of gender – that are embedded also in the LGBTQ arena – to create and inhabit spaces for themselves.

In order to generate a coherent set of arguments, this discussion chapter is comprised of three different sections. First, I talk about the factors that shape the hierarchy of identities and impact on the construction of queer spaces. This details the conditions which lead to the creation of exclusive spaces and ghettoisation of lesbians and bisexual women NGOs. Second, I highlight the main reasons for the failure of the exclusive spaces. Finally, I discuss the different ways in which lesbians and bisexual women could find spaces outside of the homonormative dynamics that hold back their progress in their fight for equal opportunities and access to human rights.

Gender dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs and the relevance of spaces

One of the key contributions of this investigation is its identification of the ways in which LGBTQ identities are organised and hierarchised within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico in this specific socio-historical context. Despite the assumption that the LGBTQ political movement has an understanding of sexual inequality and homophobia as a structural problem within society and the fact that the LGBTQ movement was formed in part from within the feminist movement, the movement is not inherently always familiar with the wider implications of these inequalities, the types of factors that drive them, and the implications of these for LGBTQ politics and activism. Indeed, quite the contrary

to the misconception that these activists fully grasp the structural problem of gender inequality, the thesis found that these wider power relations are reproduced within the LGBTQ arena, resulting in the invisibilisation, on different levels, and by different means, of lesbians and bisexual women (the identities on which I focus my research). In this section, my objective is to untangle the different factors that permeate and help to shape the marginalisation of these specific identities within the LGBTQ arena, and specifically in the sphere of non-governmental organisations and to articulate and highlight the relevance of "spaces" as a concept that goes beyond a geographical/physical terrain.

As is well known, social relations are constructed, shaped and reproduced by different practices within any given society in particular sociohistorical contexts. In the terrain of gender, patriarchy is the system of oppression that organises society under unequal power relations in which masculinity is prioritised and privileged over the subjects that perform femininity. However, this system of oppression does not work in isolation or unilaterally; the set of practices that conform to it are linked and connected, such as heterosexuality, which functions as a means of oppression for heterosexual women, as has been explained by both Rich (1980) and Wittig (1992). Relatedly, Rubin (1975) and Butler (1990) developed the more structured idea that heterosexuality is not only a part of the patriarchal system, but rather acts as another system of oppression, given that heterosexuality does not imply a simple sexual orientation, but rather is a set of practices that constrain social relations and encompass gender matters. This system of oppression has been coined heteronormativity, a concept which I have dedicated some space to in my theoretical framework. Consequently, as I have mentioned recurrently through this thesis, it has been useful for me to utilise the concept of heteropatriarchy, understood as patriarchy coupled with assumed heterosexuality, as the structural system that causes and reproduces the marginalisation of subjects, related in some way or another, to the performance of femininity, which is reproduced in everyday life by means of heteronormative practices.

Nonetheless, my thesis has shown that, in spheres of life in which heteronormative practices are challenged and somehow rejected – such as that of LGBTQ associations – patriarchal practices are still embedded, carrying plenty of relevance for the organisation and structuring of LGBTQ identities within this sphere. Here, I argue – from the data gathered from my interviewees – that identities related to masculinity and/or socialised as male subjects, and therefore related to some extent to phallocentricity, remain privileged and are afforded a higher status. Moreover, it is crucial to highlight that heteronormative practices have permeated the non-heterosexual sphere and therefore some heteronormativity rules and norms are found in the LGBTQ field as homonormativity rules, regarding how people negotiate their sexuality, despite attempts to challenge homonormativity from autonomous groups or groups that are more critical of homonormativity as a system of oppression to the LGBTQ community. Thus, my thesis found that LGBTQ NGOs are governed by both (hetero)patriarchal and homonormative practices, which is to say that such practices are reinforced, mirrored and reproduced within LGBTQ spaces. In the same way as the broader Mexican society is organised and governed.

Hence, this helps to explain why gay men have more opportunities regarding access to public spaces, and access to sponsors and funding, and it also helps us to understand that the relative stability within their organisations is not an accidental occurrence. This is noticeable, and evident when we zoom in on the series of dynamics among different actors in the LGBTQ field. On one side, as in other spheres of work, NGOs that are considered as workplaces, tend to be run by and taken over by men, given that historically men have had more access to public spaces in comparison to women. Principally, we can trace this to the fact that women have become related to motherhood, and the role of caring for and raising children, purely because of their reproductive capacity (Ortner, 1972). In contrast, men are considered as the primary economic suppliers, the ones that go to work (Hardill and Baines, 2003) and participate in the public sphere, reproducing the sexual division of labour (Aslaksen, 2002). This

gendered pattern of work brings two important matters to the fore: first, the fact that the sexual division of labour enhances gender inequalities in LGBTQ arena, and second, the gendered inhabitation of these workplace/public spaces (NGOs), helping to facilitate the construction of hierarchies.

The case of LGBTQ NGOs is particular because of their nature as workplaces and as a kind of hybrid public/private space linked to caring and voluntary work. Therefore, in these spaces, the gendered dynamics overlap, causing problematic social relations related to gender inequalities in both public and private spheres. In other words, third sector spaces fulfil the norms of workplaces (public sphere) in which women have historically been marginalised, having fewer opportunities in comparison to men. This is related to the gender education and socialisation processes in which men are taught to negotiate management skills (Acker, 1990; Lewis and Simpson, 2010) making it easier for them to handle circumstances that are related to higher positions in organisations "naturally", a perception that contributes towards the so-called glass ceiling (Purcell, MacArthur and Samblanet, 2010). This concept of the glass ceiling can be adapted to NGOs when we are talking about the existing differences in how men deal with sponsors, have access to funding, and manage and keep organisations stable, as well as their privileged access to leading positions (CEOs). As the findings of my empirical chapters show, mixed NGOs tend to be led by gay men, reproducing the assumption of the sexual division of labour and reproducing gender stereotypes that exist in broader society.

At the same time, NGOs are considered as spaces that are related to the types of nurturing/caring (private sphere) activities that have been linked historically to women; thus, women have to deal with the burden of work as an obligation. In other words, as an act of love that does not have to be paid (Held, 2002; Nelson and England, 2002; Ungerson, 1997a). This is related to a whole imaginary in which the array of activities linked to caring and helping others, as well as providing emotional support,

are something that women are expected to do as part of their mandatory tasks. Consequently, women working in the third sector tend to be considered as volunteers, or as women doing 'what they know how to do', rather than employees that deserve a salary. Thus, this issue of labour rights that women in general face when working within heteropatriarchal structures, also affects lesbians and bisexual women working in NGOs that are fighting to achieve LGBTQ rights, where their work is not seen as directly relevant or equally valued. The work that is done by them is seen in these associations as help only, working on agendas that, as my findings show, do not directly address matters that concern lesbians and bisexual women. Consequently, LGBTQ NGOs are spaces that enhance gender inequalities, given that the nature of these spaces (physical and symbolic) overlaps with wider gender dynamics, further entrenching the visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women, as well as blocking the development of a sense of belonging and the construction of an identity within these spaces. This latter point forms the second theme of this section.

The habitation of spaces, before all else, has a social element which is related to identity (Valentine, 2002); therefore, grasping spaces as a social category also implies that they encompass gender and sexuality relationships (Ingram, 1993; Knopp, 1995). Consequently, spaces of social relationships help to shape society at different levels. For instance, borders - or the dichotomous division of public and private spheres that historically have confined women to the private and men to the public - have worked to discipline the heteropatriarchal society (Spivak, 1988). This is because under this social structure, masculinity and heteronormative practices are the ones related to and allowed into the public space, as I discussed above regarding the sexual division of labour. Thus, spaces function as an apparatus of control and organisation of the society, and NGOs work as spatial, symbolic and performative spaces that help to (re)produce these dynamics of control and organisation to marginalise bodies that are related to femininity and non-heterosexual practices, as I have shown throughout the literature review, theory chapter and in the data gathered in this investigation.

Hence, lesbians and bisexual women face more obstacles to visibilising their agendas given that the spaces are heterosexualised or masculinised, in feminist or LGBTQ NGOs respectively. And despite their lack of belonging to feminist heterosexualised spaces, the data gathered showed that, lesbians and bisexual women prefer to build relationships or participate in feminist movements, rather than in the LGBT movement.

One of the most relevant consequences of this, is that they are not able to build a sense of belonging in those spaces because, directly or subtly, lesbians and bisexual women are rejected or ignored by the members of the organisations, their bosses and sponsors.

> "I am comfortable working with HIV testing; I have been working with this for many years. I would like to work with women [...] the truth is that there are not many, or it is very difficult to reach them because they work with LGBT issues. And by 'LGBT issues' understand gay and the issue of HIV which is what the majority are dedicated to; or sexual and reproductive rights that have to do with Legal Abortion that works with heterosexual women." (Interviewee 3)[225]

In contrast, gay men struggle less to negotiate relationships and likewise, to find a sense of belonging in the associations, often becoming the public figures of the organisations in which, they participate. In addition, the way that many gay men manage their relationships within the LGBTQ field with different moral standards, as well as their relationship with selling services and to the wider market, makes it easier for them to belong to and move around this arena, in comparison to lesbians and bisexual women.

In the specific case of NGOs that are mixed, the data gathered showed that the agendas of lesbians and bisexual women are very often left aside, as I have discussed at more length in previous chapters.

[225] Yo me siento cómoda trabajan haciendo pruebas de VIH, muchos años me he dedicado a esto, sí me gustaría trabajar con mujeres [...] la verdad es que no hay muchas o es muy complicado llegar a ellas porque trabajan tema LGBT y por tema LGBT entiéndase gay y el tema del VIH que es a lo que se dedica la mayoría o derechos sexuales y reproductivos que tiene que ver con Interrupción Legal del Embarazo que trabaja con mujeres heterosexuales.

These agendas encompass topics that are related to the access and visibilisation of sexual health for women that have sex with women, violence in relationships between women, as well as the strengthening of their identity and community as non-heterosexual women. Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women work for agendas that do not concern them directly, as, for instance, the participant in charge of the workshop for trans women or the one that is assigned to doing HIV tests for gay men.

This whole set of issues further contributes to the invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women within LGBTQ NGOs, and with invisibilisation – as I developed in the theoretical framework – I refer to a social condition that has several dimensions, which are interwoven into three specific types of problems. First, with the sense of belonging and identity, lesbians and bisexual women do not feel any kind of belonging to LGBTQ NGOs because their topics are perceived to be trivial or non-existent. As a consequence, this leads to the second problem, the impossibility of lesbians and bisexual women to fully inhabit those associations and the space symbolically, given the feeling of lack of belonging to existing LGBTQ spaces. This creates a third issue which refers to the lack of recognition and social representation in comparison to more visible and better represented groups/identities. Consequently, the invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs means that they cannot fully inhabit the spaces that are supposed to be also for them. Therefore, these spatial and performative spaces do not help women to feel that they belong, because mixed organisations, generally, do not work with the agendas of lesbians and bisexual women – that are more related to sexual health, violence in their relationships and strengthening their community, as I mentioned previously. This results in the imperative need for lesbians and bisexual women to find their own spaces for building their identity as a social movement with the same opportunities, to be visible and at the same time to have access to the same funding opportunities as other identities do, such as gay men and to some extent, trans women.

The failure of exclusive spaces for lesbians and bisexual women

In order to grasp the necessity for lesbians and bisexual women to construct exclusive spaces for themselves, taking into account their experiences and the decision-making process, and at the same time to analyse and challenge from a critical perspective their ghettoisation. First it is necessary to untangle and understand the relationship between heterosexuality – understood not as a simple sexual orientation, but rather as an institution – and the construction of lesbians as social subjects, as well as the relationship with the division of spaces in the LGBTQ arena.

Even though heterosexuality is commonly seen as a sexual orientation only, it has embedded deeper practices and norms that are linked to the discipline and control of women. This whole array of rules is related to heterosexuality as a social system of oppression and tends to relegate and oppress women as social subjects by a process learnt during socialisation. For instance, the disciplining of women commonly relates to their reproductive capacity and the relationships that they have with men; thus women are reduced to wives, housewives and mothers (Harding, 2016; Rich, 1980; Wittig, 1992) or mothers to be (Lind, 2009). Hence, heterosexuality becomes a norm that has to be fulfilled, and it is imposed as well as maintained by force (Rich, 1980), being understood by (radical) feminist scholars as a system of oppression that functions together with patriarchy, as I have discussed in different sections of this dissertation.

Nonetheless, the relevance to the discussion here is that heteronormativity marginalises and discriminates on different levels and in different ways women who do not (only) have sex-affective relationships with men. Wittig (1992) affirms that as a consequence of not fitting in with heteronormative practices lesbians are not considered as women. This is because for women to be fully understood as a social construct, their performance has to encompass heteronormativity; therefore, if they do not accomplish this requirement, they do not fulfil socially what a woman has to

be. Consequently, lesbians experience double invisibilisation; first, because of their gender and second, because of their sexual orientation, which in some cases, as a result of this social rejection, leads to the construction of lesbians[226] as a political identity. This is a way of existing outside of the heteropatriarchal system, so that they do not have to build relationships with subjects (men) that have been considered as oppressors, or as a way of helping in the fight against the invisibilisation of lesbians, as some participants stated:

> "I could identify myself more as a non-binary person; however, in the political struggle it seems more necessary to be on the side of lesbians, it is where more work is needed, more visibility." (Interviewee 2)[227]

Some of the participants are aware of the lack of opportunities of specific groups, such as lesbians, seeing the theoretical idea of separatism as an option to step away from the dynamics of LGBTQ in which gay men have more opportunities for success. This may be perceived as an attractive option as lesbians and bisexual women continue to be invisibilised or tokenised (considered as a quota to be covered), as I have analysed and discussed in previous chapters. Thus, the theoretical idea of a 'lesbian continuum' – which refers to women's relationships outside of the romantic that encourage empowerment, as a political as I developed in the theoretical chapter – seems to have several advantages for lesbians and bisexual women in Mexico. This is considered as an opportunity to strengthen their community and at the same time help to generate a sense of belonging, as well as an identity which is crucial for political participation and is related to the inhabitation of spaces, as this activist stated as an echo of the general feeling of lesbians and bisexual activists in Mexico:

[226] I do not mention bisexual women here, because the marginalisation that they experience is to some extent different. They are discriminated against also because of their gender and their sexual orientation, but in addition they are discriminated against because they could decide to ban sexual-affective relationships with men, as a political position, and they do not do so.

[227] Yo podría identificarme más como persona no binaria, sin embargo, en la lucha me parece necesario estar del lado de las lesbianas, es donde se necesita más trabajo, más visibilidad.

> And I told them that, yes we had to think about the health of lesbians, but what we really had to do was strengthen the lesbian movement [...] The lesbian collectives are the ones that cannot last. What we saw is that lesbians who work in LGBT or feminist organisations, well, their organisations last, but they were not the owner and lesbians could not put forward their agenda." (Interviewee 11)[228]

For these reasons, the construction of exclusive NGOs for lesbians and bisexual women within the LGBTQ community becomes more a necessity than a luxury, as the only way to visibilise their specific needs and agendas. This measure tends to benefit the lesbians' identity, helping to make it stronger – and bisexual women's identity to a lesser extent, because they are not totally included in lesbians' exclusive spaces. However, as my findings show, some dynamics reproduced within these exclusive spaces reproduce heteronormativity – better referred to in non-heterosexual spaces as homonormativity – and other discriminatory practices make it difficult for these spaces to be fully successful.

These problematic dynamics exist in two different dimensions. One side relates to activities inside the exclusive spaces; for example, the way in which women negotiate personal relationships inside the workplace, which links to socialisation processes which urge women to prioritise personal relationships over their careers, as I analysed in the empirical chapter. I showed a pattern in which the stability of the NGOs created by lesbians and bisexual women relies on the stability of their personal relationships, while gay men can often use their romantic and sexual relationships to build professional relationships.

In addition, the circumstances under which members of the associations have to create exclusive spaces (ghettos) plays a crucial role in the success (or lack of success) of the organisations. Card (1990)

[228] Y yo les decía que, sí teníamos que pensar en la salud de las mujeres lesbianas, pero lo que realmente teníamos que hacer era fortalecer el movimiento lésbico [...] Las colectivas lésbicas son las que no aguantan. Lo que vimos es que las lesbianas que trabajan en organizaciones LGBT o feministas pues sus organizaciones aguantan, pero no eran suyas y no podían meter a la agenda lésbica.

explained that the success of lesbian separatism in visibilising the oppression of lesbians, must have its foundations in political resistance, instead of being based on dissidence. This situation, in the first place, implies that women have the choice or consciousness to separate themselves from men and masculine identities. However, in Mexico the separatism of lesbians – and bisexual women to some extent – from the LGBTQ arena comes in response to a structural invisibilisation; thus, the ghettoisation more than a choice, is the most viable option to visibilise themselves. One of the consequences of this separation is that it is created under dynamics that reproduce the marginalisation of other oppressed minorities, such as bisexual and trans women, based on dissidence (Card, 1990). These dynamics are discriminatory and deny access within these spaces to certain identities that are related to masculinity and men, to some extent. In other words, separatists deny trans people access to spaces, limiting access only to lesbians. In summary, the sort of ghettoisation in the Mexican LGBTQ arena tends to fail, in terms of creating a sense of community, alliances and the stability of the associations, as well as in terms of recognition of intersectional experiences. This was a theme that a number of participants expressed during the interviews. Thus, the lack of success of this measure – despite the different roots and reasons – can be likened to the failed outcomes of the radical lesbian separatism some decades ago (Jennings, 2018).

On the second dimension of these problematic dynamics, structural elements and circumstances exist that hold back the visibilisation and construction of exclusive NGOs for lesbians' and bisexual women's spaces, thereby producing the ghettoisation of spaces for these women. This array of factors is related to three systems that shape and organise dynamics in the LGBTQ arena; namely phallocentricity, homonormativity and neoliberal practices from the international development field. However, it is important to highlight that these practices go beyond the LGBTQ realm, or perhaps more accurately, they come in from wider, external structures of power that help to legitimise the

associations in different ways. As Lind (2013) states, these practices have permeated development projects, both in theory and practice.

Phallocentricity

Phallocentrism is the system of oppression acknowledged implicitly by some of the participants of this study as the overarching system that can help explain the organisation gender dynamics in an unequal way within the LGBTQ community. This system, as I mentioned in the theoretical chapter, implies that society is organised and hierarchised by giving a higher social position to subjects that own a phallus (Thomson, 1991; Lacan in Butler, 2011; Mackinnon, 1982), being the broader system of oppression, as figure 1 in chapter 2 shows, in which heteropatriarchy is an example of this, given that (heteropatriarchal) societies, including the Mexican one is organised to benefit males, who are labelled as men because of their phallus and in consequence they are at the top of the hierarchisation of society. However, the way in which phallocentricity works is more complex outside spaces that do not privilege heteronormativity, such as non-heterosexual spaces, and therefore the LGBTQ field. There phallocentricity is still being reproduced, but through different norms. The most obvious example is gay men who were socialised as men and consequently perform – non-hegemonic – masculinity in a different way but one which also allows them a privileged position within the LGBTQ field because of their gendered socialisation, in a heteropatriarchal and at the same time phallocentric society.

The case of trans women is more complex. First, it is necessary to point out and grasp the fact that trans people are in the LGBTQ field because of their sexual identity, regardless of their sexual orientation. Their agenda and needs are more related to the recognition of their identities, unlike lesbians and bisexual women, but these can overlap if trans women identify themselves as lesbians or bisexuals. However, the place that trans women have in the hierarchy of the LGBTQ community is

mainly due to their sexual identity, and this gives them have a higher position than lesbians and bisexual women. This is because they were to some extent socialised under masculine gendered norms, which often provides them with the necessary skills to accomplish better management with regard to the associations, or prioritisation of their careers over personal life, despite the fact that they are women and now perform femininity. This argument is stronger when we look at trans men and queer identities that were socialised under a feminine gender and tend to be less visible and perform masculinity outside of the social imperative, as I stated in depth in the first empirical chapter, and also when I discussed non-hegemonic masculinities in my theoretical chapter.

Moreover, the perception and the negotiation of dynamics regarding phallocentricity influences the legitimation of bisexual identities. By way of explanation, bisexual women are defined by their relationships with men and excluded from lesbian spaces because of that, while bisexual men tend to be classified as gay because they have relationships with men, ignoring the relationships that they have with women. Thus, my findings show that the key factor in defining bisexuality is the relationship with subjects that own a phallus. Finally, the lesbian separatism in Mexican NGOs is also based on phallocentricity, which leads to discriminatory actions related to transphobia and the marginalisation of bisexual women. As such, my findings show that phallocentricity as a structural system of oppression organises the dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs and from the perception of lesbian participants this also works as a crucial factor in the failure of lesbian and bisexual NGOs in the Mexican LGBTQ arena.

Homonormativity

The second factor that structurally shapes the dynamics around the LGBTQ community that affect lesbian and bisexual NGOs is homonormativity –a system that is reproduced and copied to some extent from heteronormative practices. As I have mentioned repeatedly through this dissertation

Mexican society is organised under heteronormativity and therefore non-heterosexual spaces such as the LGBTQ field are constructed under similar conditions, given that this field exists within the broader Mexican society. Hence, people that belong to the LGBTQ community are permeated by these norms, but the way in which these rules are reproduced and performed tend to be merged with new ones, creating homonormative practices within LGBTQ spaces. These norms, while not privileging heterosexuality, imitate and privilege other elements related to other dimensions of the identities that are related to class, race, and gender. For instance, gay men tend to have more access to better economic opportunities (Bell, 1991; Alder and Brenner, 1992; Ingram, 1993; Valentine, 2002), as well as the relationship with the pink market/economy and funding by private companies. This was an observation which a number of participants shared:

> "[Speaking of spaces within the NGO] for men no, they already have many spaces, they are everywhere and they are the face of LGBT discourse and the pink market." (Interviewee 2)[229]

Resulting in more media visibilisation, this advantage is embedded in gender inequalities that obey the wider structural and historical inequalities of gender, in which women do not have access to the same economic and work opportunities, as well as the fact that the work of women is less valued within the market because it is understood as an act of love (Held, 2002; Nelson and England, 2002; Ungerson, 1997a). Therefore, my findings show that homonormativity works to further shape the lack of success of NGOs for lesbians and bisexual women. In this context, the intersections between gender, race and class all work to restrict the progress on these agendas.

[229] [Hablando de espacios dentro de la ONG] Para hombres no, ya tienes muchos espacios están en todos lados y son la cara del discurso LGBT y el mercado rosa.

Market stakes

Finally, the market interests embodied in the international development arena are an important element of the negotiation of dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs and consequently in working to shape the failure of lesbians' and bisexual women's exclusive spaces. International bodies through their economic funding to NGOs have the authority and power to shape the agendas of LGBTQ NGOs. Nevertheless, their actions have shown that they systematically marginalise non-heterosexual women, as, for instance, in the UN conventions of Beijing and Cairo (Petchesky, 2000a; Corrêa, 2002), in 1995 and 1994 respectively, in which women were only considered in matters related to their reproductive capacity (Lind, 2009), obscuring their sexual rights behind reproductive rights. Consequently, the measures taken by the UN – which is the main authority for NGOs in countries that follow these international development recommendations – are one of the principal aspects that organise the hierarchies, agendas and priorities of the LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. This is because the majority of them depend on the funding delivered by sponsors. These sponsors could be international, public or private, but what they all have in common is that they decide the conditions of funding, to which the NGOs have to adapt their agendas. As a result, lesbians and bisexual women are rarely a targeted population, as the majority of participants stated in the data.

> "The budget focuses on maternal mortality; however, it is very clear that public policy will not be focused on non-heterosexual women, even as a line of action, we are not within the lines of Human Rights, we are not in the women's institute, we do not exist for the government." (Interviewee 3)[230]

This factor is crucial to explaining the failure of lesbians' and bisexual women's NGOs to attract funding for their specific agendas because it demonstrates that in the same way as the majority of

[230] El presupuesto se centra en la mortalidad materna, sin embargo, es muy claro que la política pública no va a ir centrada hacia mujeres no heterosexuales, ni siquiera como una línea de acción, no estamos dentro de las líneas de Derechos Humanos, no estamos en el instituto de las mujeres, no existimos para el gobierno.

society, the LGBTQ field is governed by the interests of the market and neoliberal measures. Thus, the agenda is very much shaped by these interests. A good example of this is the prioritisation of trans women in the LGBTQ hierarchy because they fulfil the requirement of 'bodies at risk of HIV/AIDS' independently of performing a masculine identity. This example shows that market interests are stronger than phallocentric and homonormative practices at the moment of shaping the agendas and lines of action of LGBTQ NGOs. Thus, it is important to consider the ways in which market dynamics affect to a great extent the failure of lesbian and bisexual organisations.

Measuring failure

So far then, I have argued that it is necessary to interrogate and challenge these three factors – of phallocentricity, homonormativity and market interests – which all come together inside of the LGBTQ realm, if we want to change the lack of success of organisations working for lesbians and bisexual women. Given that the empirical chapters have focused on this apparent 'failure' of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, it is important at this juncture to reflect on what is meant by 'failure'. In other words, I consider it relevant to unravel the understanding of failure which underpins this thesis.

First, it is important to note that the idea, or more accurately, reality/fact of the invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women in Mexico and Latin America is recognised in different studies on this issue which I addressed in my literature review. For instance, Friedman (2010) states that symbolic spaces on the internet are relevant for creating community and identity, given that there are not enough physical spaces to build community and identity. In a similar vein, but as a comparison, Thayer (2010) points out the gender differences that lead to hindrances in the development of the gay and lesbian movements in different countries of Latin America, including Mexico. In addition, the fact that the different sponsors, public and private, do not have plans of action to support organisations exclusively

advocating lesbians' and bisexual women's agendas also is considered as a failure, because the main reason to have their own organisations was to be visible to the sponsors, thereby having access to funding focused on their needs.

> "Because being able to have the structure to obtain resources on the issue of non-heterosexual women is very complicated, the most important NGO on lesbian issues has been around for 25 years and the reality is that they do not always have resources to do the job." (Interviewee 3)[231]

The second dimension that I focus on in terms of measuring the idea of failure is the perception of the participants about their own situation. There is a general feeling that they have not achieved the results that they wanted or expected. The construction of their movement is an unfinished process, in which they have not found a way to enter the sponsors' interests:

> "If lesbians and bisexual women have got [funds] it was because they know how to adapt and accommodate them, and they are accepted. It is because they are not considered, we do not exist, we are not even political rewards, we are so nothing that we are not even political rewards." (Interviewee 12)[232]

Moreover, there is a general feeling among those women that there is no strength within their movement, so they consider strengthening the movement as a project in itself, as the ex-CEO of NGO D highlighted:

> "So, for 2016 [advocacy] was for lesbian human rights defenders on the specific issue of lesbians. What we wanted was to make an agenda because the things that we dedicate ourselves to do to as lesbians do not come out. And then we don't know what we want.

[231] porque poder tener la estructura para obtener recursos en el tema de mujeres no heterosexuales es muy complicado, la ONG más importante en temas de mujeres lesbianas lleva 25 años y la realidad es que no siempre tienen recursos para hacer el trabajo.
[232] Si han conseguido[fondos] las mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales ha sido porque saben cómo adaptarlos y acomodarlos, y así son aceptados. Es justo porque no están considerados, no existimos, ni siquiera somos un botín político, somos tan nada que ni siquiera somos botín político.

> So, the result was: Strengthen the political participation of lesbians and bisexuals, in issues and agenda for them." (Interviewee 11)[233]

Finally, the idea of failure is also related to the lack of stability and permanence of these organisations, resulting in an impossibility to create projects for long-term results that at the same time help to secure funding.

> "In collectives in Tijuana, some women did a poll and they found that all the collectives [of lesbians] have ended because the relationships between couples are over. It's something that happens all the time. I've seen it recently and everything finishes because they are in the mood of "I collaborated with this, and you gave this" [referring to fighting for the NGO]. But I think it follows a segmentation system." (Interviewee 12)[234]

Consequently, the feeling of a lack of success can be related to matters that are directly linked to gender dynamics, which follow structural systems of oppression, as I have addressed in this chapter and as I have been arguing throughout this thesis. However, it is important to think beyond this, looking for other ways and paths to achieve a complete visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women as a political identity that has a presence in the agendas of LGBTQ NGOs, lines of action, access to funding and achievement of the same opportunities and rights as other identities. In the following section, I develop these potential alternative paths to visibilisation.

[233] En 2015 hicimos un comal de incidencia [evento para hablar sobre la incidencia política de mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales], pero fue de puras colectivas feministas y no obtuvimos ningún resultado. Entonces para 2016 [el comal de incidencia] fue para lesbianas defensoras de derechos humanos en el tema específico de lesbianas. Entonces lo que queríamos era hacer una agenda de porque no salen las cosas que nos dedicamos a hacer nosotras como lesbianas. Y luego no sabemos qué queremos. Entonces el resultado fue: Fortalecer la participación política de lesbianas y bisexuales, en temas y agenda para ellas.

[234] En las colectivas en Tijuana, unas morras hicieron un rastreo y todas las colectivas se han terminado porque las relaciones se terminan, y es algo que pasa todo el tiempo yo lo he visto recientemente y vale todo porque se ponen el plan de "yo puse esto, y tú esto", Pero creo que obedece a un sistema de segmentación.

Towards visibilisation: the construction of spaces for lesbians and bisexual women

I have explored the different factors that frustrate the success of organisations of lesbians and bisexual women, arguing that invisibilisation of these identities is a systematic practice embedded in the environment of the LGBTQ community. In addition, I have pointed out that among the same community of lesbians and bisexual women it is difficult to, first recognise the agendas and needs of each other, and second, to find real affinity and create alliances, showing as a consequence a lack of identity as well as unity and strength of the movement, especially in comparison with the strengths of the wider LGBTQ movement or more accurately, gay movement. As I stated in the previous sections, their invisibilisation is embedded in structural gender inequalities and because of this, it is necessary to note also the achievements that they have accomplished, transgressing these gender stereotypes that are entrenched in everyday dynamics as well as in the socialisation of heteropatriarchal societies, such as exists in Mexico. Thus, the fact that lesbians and bisexual women have taken to the public sphere by means of political participation, activism and the creation of these associations implies some level of progress, because NGOs function for women as platforms for access to the public sphere (Tarres, 1995) and as a means of consciousness-raising through political mobilisation (Zu Chen, 2014). In doing so, they challenge the heteropatriarchal system, being visible to an extent, and inhabiting spaces that were historically denied to women. However, as I have presented in this and previous chapters, their attempts to build spaces with the same opportunities as gay men have failed.

In this section, I discuss that despite the hindrances preventing women from achieving visibility within LGBTQ NGOs, they are searching for different ways of challenging gender norms and looking for the inhabitation of spaces outside of homonormative practices, in order to carry on with their agendas and organisations successfully. This encompasses the visibilisation of their needs and agendas that

relate to strengthening their community, sexual health information and reproductive rights, and gaining access to funds, as well as being considered in the creation of programmes by sponsors at all levels, including national/international and private/public. Therefore, drawing on the theory from this thesis and the data gathered from my participants, I posit that there are three potential ways to help the visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women and enable them to more successfully achieve their goal of having more equal access to human rights with respect to other identities within LGBTQ NGOs. These possible paths imply challenging the different systems of oppression that they face and that hold back their progress.

First, it is necessary for these women to use market rules to their advantage. In this sense, women working within the third sector tend to work as volunteers, because generosity is associated with femininity. Therefore, they are often judged and seen as greedy by other activists if they enter the market to sell their services**,** because from the Marxist and Weberian tradition work (or selling services) is by itself seen as an alienating activity (Badgett and Folbre, 2001). Hence, it is important to try to turn around the assumption of work as an alienating activity by itself, and the general negative judgment from activists regarding the decision of some lesbians and bisexual women to sell their services. Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women working in their associations can work to challenge the gender norms around unpaid work, taking advantage of market rules and acting outside of gender stereotypes, in a similar way as gay men do. This means that they can charge money for the services that they offer without feeling guilty, or accept economic support from brands and private companies to be able to take care of the economic needs of the organisations. Because, as my interview data showed, as it currently stands, lesbians and bisexual women feel guilty about asking for money for the services that they offer, such as workshops or emotional support therapies, and they have to justify why they need the money.

> "It is important that you understand the difference between profits, which is to charge more, that I am not going to give away my work, work costs." (Interviewee 17)[235]

This situation occurs because historically, and also in our current society, the work of women in areas related to caring tends to be unpaid (Aslaksen, 2002; Hardill and Baines, 2003). In this way, taking into account that neoliberal dynamics permeate the LGBTQ community, lesbians and bisexual women could be able to sustain their organisations economically for the long term and not depend directly on sponsors and the lines of actions that they prioritise, finding some autonomy if they take advantage of market rules for their own interest. This leads us to the second possible path towards the visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women as political subjects, and their agendas.

The second possibility refers to the construction of exclusive spaces for lesbians and bisexual women, but from an intersectional perspective. This proposal is not independent of the previous one; indeed both are to some extent intertwined. However, for clarity, I am discussing them separately here in order to think about the different, complex dimensions of the unequal dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs. As I have stated previously, to fully grasp this complexity, implies the need for the self-critique of lesbians as subjects that exercise unequal power relations that work to marginalise bisexual and trans women. Hence, the exclusive spaces that lesbians have built have failed to some extent in their main aim of strengthening the community because generally they are exclusionary towards other feminine subjects.

Nonetheless, it is important to highlight the fact that the construction of associations of lesbians and bisexual women, which use their means to build and inhabit spaces outside of institutionalisation, does work to challenge homonormativity. Rich's (1980) arguments about the lesbian existence and lesbian

[235] Es importante que se entienda la diferencia entre lucrar, que es cobrar de más, a que no voy a regalar mi trabajo, el trabajo cuesta. Y todo tiene un costo.

continuum, provides us with an alternative way of building a society without patriarchy and the unequal power relations that it encompasses, such as agendas, sponsors and LGBTQ leaders that tend to be gay men. Because although they do not play a specific role in romantic relationships with women there are other relationships, such as community and labour relationships, in which the gender inequality is clear, showing that unequal power relations related to patriarchy permeate other arenas outside of heteronormative society. Thus, in this proposition of separatism, lesbians and bisexual women do not have to follow and align with the international development authorities regarding agendas and priorities. One example is non-institutional collectives, which trade knowledge, workshops, facilities etc, with other lesbian-feminist or feminist collectives. These spaces have existed within and outside of the LGBTQ community for many years; however, as I have mentioned, their exclusionary and discriminatory practices diminish their success as spaces for the visibilisation of lesbians, and as a consequence, bisexual women, because they tend to be rejected from lesbians' organisations. Therefore, if lesbians and bisexual women propose to build spaces to amplify their voices, using the argument of spaces exclusive for women outside of the existing institutional arrangements and the rules of the market, it can help them build exclusive spaces, making use of the separatism based in political resistance. Thus, lesbians and bisexual women leave outside of their organisations the unequal dynamics, which includes relationship with sponsors and donors, as well as gay men.

Consequently, the visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women in the different dimensions of the LGBTQ realm has advanced gradually, to some extent, and has the potential to transgress the gender norms that are embodied in wider society. Although they are still reproducing some homonormative practices, they are trying to find other ways to break down those structural systems that permeate all levels of society and, at the same time, are embedded in their gendered socialisation as women. Irrespective of whether they decide on the first path (embracing market rules) or on the second path

(finding a way to trade horizontally among collectives) or both, the crucial point to highlight is that Mexican lesbians and bisexual women face the imperative need of building their own spaces as a political statement and as a way of creating consciousness about the inequality that women suffer in the LGBTQ arena, thereby helping to women to gain a place in the public space and making them more visible. These spaces have been called queer heterotopias (Jones, 2009) because they challenge and go beyond the homonormative practices that non-heterosexual spaces reproduce.

These two paths address the agency of women and their responsibility to deconstruct and challenge the gender norms that have become fixed in their cultural and social relationships. However, it is necessary to acknowledge the key point of this thesis, that their marginalisation within the LGBTQ community is provoked by patriarchal and homonormative dynamics within the LGBTQ NGOs and the stakeholders within this arena. Consequently, the third potential path towards visibilisation that is crucial to highlight, is the imperative need to modify the unequal dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs.

The mission needs to be done by means of altering and challenging the agendas and projects that offer funding for lesbians and bisexual women, as well as through the LGBTQ NGOs, to shape them towards the opening of spaces for lesbians and bisexual women, not only to cover quotas but rather to fight against their invisibilisation and the lack of policy for them. This is important given that the responsibility for the invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women comes from structural dynamics, in which "gender operates to naturalize, justify, and perpetuate global restructuring as relations of domination" (Marchand and Runyan, 2010, p. 16). These relations of domination have been holding women back in different dimensions, including the LGBTQ arena.

Conclusion

In summary, the LGBTQ field in Mexico currently prioritises and privileges gay men and trans women, due to the phallocentric system of oppression which positions these identities in a higher status and allows greater access to spaces and resources. However, it is important to emphasise that the prioritisation of trans women does not imply that their bodies and identities do not experience different sorts of discrimination and marginalisation that are not related to phallocentricity but are instead linked to wider processes of misogyny and heteropatriarchal norms. Nevertheless, independently of the discrimination of trans women, lesbians and bisexual women still struggle more to have a place within LGBTQ mixed spaces in comparison to trans women, and this situation leads to their desire to create their own spaces. However, given that there are several structural hindrances in relation to fixed gender inequalities – for example, the unequal access to spaces, the understanding of work as an act of love, and the need for exclusive spaces outside of patriarchal dynamics, as well as the authority of international bodies to shape agendas, as well as the hypervisibilisation of HIV/AIDS issues – those spaces have failed to visibilise the agendas and needs of lesbians and bisexual women.

Therefore, lesbians and bisexual women are currently working towards enhancing their visibilisation within the LGBTQ realm and this is an ongoing agenda that still has a long way to go. Indeed, both within and outside the movement, lesbians and bisexual women still need to raise awareness among different members of the community, facilitate the development of more equal relations and unravel the current Mexican hierarchy of LGBTQ identities, which is embedded in phallocentricity and homonormative practices. These objectives, in the context of being organised under the current rules and priorities of international development authorities, which are the principal actors that exercise unequal power relations over lesbians and bisexual women, are likely for now to continue to prove evasive.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Throughout this thesis I have discussed the gender and sexuality dynamics of lesbians and bisexual women within LGBTQ NGOs, arguing that these dynamics are unequal despite the assumed awareness of social inequality in the LGBTQ collective, due to their marginalised position in Mexican society. The unequal power dynamics exercised in this realm are not only socio-cultural or symbolic, they permeate tangible fields causing marginalisation in multiple spaces and holding back the access of lesbians and bisexual women to basic human rights, such as access to sexual education or a life free of violence. This marginalisation is shaped by different factors that have their roots outside of the LGBTQ arena and cause the marginalisation of women in other spheres of life. This thesis has attempted to argue that these factors include systems of oppression that shape society in general, such as phallocentricity and heteropatriarchy, as well as the 'logic' of the market and its interests, resulting in the invisibilisation of lesbians' and bisexual women's needs. This reading of gender and sexuality dynamics contributes to wider debates around gender equality within the LGBTQ arena by taking into

account the lived experiences of the subjects and helping us to understand how gender equality and visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women could be achieved within these spaces.

In this conclusion chapter, I consider it crucial, first, to recap the main argument of my three analytical chapters, while revisiting my theoretical discussion. This will enable me to outline my contributions to knowledge, which forms the second section of this chapter. I will then move on to discuss and develop the different limitations that I encountered through the process of doing this research project I order to highlight potential paths towards new research. Finally, I will close the chapter and the whole thesis with some self-reflective remarks.

Thesis summary

The main analytical arguments for this thesis are dealt with in detail in Chapter 3, which is the theoretical chapter. Here, I have argued that a combination of both feminist and queer theory can provide us with the best tools for analysing the gender and sexuality inequalities that lesbians and bisexual women experience when they are working within the LGBTQ arena. With this in mind, I have utilised various branches of feminist thought, such as lesbian separatism to make sense of, and grasp how, non-heterosexual women construct their spaces. In addition, I have used queer theory to point out how social relations, and therefore unequal power dynamics, have been interwoven within various LGBTQ spaces. Moreover, my discussion of queer theory challenges the criticism that queer theory is from and for the North, Instead, I argue that it goes beyond the binaries of Global South/North, and highlight the fact that queer theory has been constructed from scratch by non-normative or hegemonic identities that are related to the South, and specifically from authors with Latinx identities. I also use the concepts of phallocentricity with heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity

and homonormativity to help explain and challenge the gender dynamics that have developed within the sphere of LGBTQ activism.

Chapter 4 is the first empirical chapter. From the data gathered I dedicated that chapter to exploring how the LGBTQ arena is socially organised under a hierarchy of identities in which gay men are on the top, followed by trans women, then lesbians and bisexual women and at the bottom trans men and queer identities. Those at the top of the hierarchy are more visible inside and outside of the LGBTQ arena, being more able to achieve their goals regarding access to rights. On the other hand, those people at the bottom of the hierarchy are marginalised and tend to be invisibilised in their fight for rights and needs. In addition to highlighting this hierarchy of identify, the chapter also exposes how gender stereotypes and norms around bodies and people have relevance in the construction of this hierarchy. The chapter shows the different obstacles that lesbians and bisexual women face, while their gay male counterparts take advantage of the performance of their masculinity. Consequently, this chapter directly addresses (RQ1) - How do lesbians and bisexual women experience and negotiate gender and sexuality dynamics in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?

Chapter 5 is the second empirical chapter. It continues from the findings of the previous chapter in exploring the factors that contribute to the marginalisation of lesbians and bisexual women within the hierarchy that shapes the dynamics of LGBTQ NGOs. In this chapter, I discussed how the lack of belonging of lesbians and bisexual women to feminists' and LGBTQ activism groups is one of the most important factors that holds back the visibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women. Moreover, this chapter shows how the inhabitation of spaces within the LGBTQ arena and the activism sphere by lesbians and bisexual women plays a crucial role in the creation of identities leading to the specific need for lesbians and bisexual women to create their own spaces. Furthermore, the chapter also shows that the visibilisation of non-heterosexual women is related to material factors; in other words, the

allocation of funding and the interests of the sponsors. Therefore, this chapter directly addresses (RQ2) - What factors have contributed to the failure of lesbians and bisexual women in getting their agendas heard in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?

Finally, Chapter 6 is dedicated to making sense of why lesbians and bisexual women are marginalised and ghettoised in the LGBTQ arena. As such, this chapter reviews the findings from Chapters 4 and 5 and links these back to the broader theorisation laid out in Chapter 3. The aim of the chapter is to try untangling the various factors that contribute to the marginalisation of non-heterosexual women, and to highlight that a number of these are not confined to the LGBTQ sphere. Phallocentricity, hetero/homonormativity and heteropatriarchy, as well as market interests, are systems that align with wider unequal power relations that invisibilise lesbians and bisexual women both within, and outsider of, the LGBTQ arena. Lastly, I used the chapter to make a normative recommendation drawn from the analysis done in previous chapters, to point out the different possibilities for fostering more equal gender and sexuality dynamics within the LGBTQ activism field in Mexico, as well as within LGBTQ NGOs. Thus, Chapter 6 directly addresses (RQ3) - Why are lesbians and bisexual women marginalised, invisibilised and ghettoised in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico?

Having summarised the main arguments and findings of each analytical chapter, I shall now develop the contributions to knowledge which this research, aims to have made. These can be divided in three: empirical, theoretical and normative. The next section aims to develop them in detail.

Contributions to knowledge

This research project responds mainly to the need to visibilise the unequal gender relations that lesbians and bisexual women face within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. In doing so, it has presented a range of empirical and theoretical findings, which highlight:

(i) The crucial role that feminist perspectives can play in helping us to understand international development dynamics, given that gender relations have a wider impact on other spheres of social and political life;

(ii) The important efforts of scholars and international agencies to visibilise the need to achieve equal human rights for LGBTQ people;

(iii) The invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women within the international development industry, on the basis that they are not reproductive bodies, showing that in this arena women are still seen as mothers, or mothers-to-be;

(iv) The current position and progress of sexual rights activists in Mexico;

(v) The invisibilisation of lesbians and bisexual women in public policy in Mexico.

The thesis has set out to explore the interaction of gender and sexuality dynamics within LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, showing that inequalities within the community lead to the ghettoisation of lesbians and bisexual women, making them invisible and unable to push their own agendas and fight for their rights. Thus, my main contribution to knowledge has been to provide a detailed account of those dynamics to fully understand how these play out in the context of Mexico, whilst also highlighting how they are embedded in wider, unequal power relations and the factors that drive them.; using as my main tool the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women, because as Marchand (2003) affirms "testimonies are probably the only means for (marginalized) Latin American women to conduct their struggle(s) at the level of the production of knowledge" (p. 71**)**. To unpack this further, I outline below three different types of contributions to the existing scholarship and the international development industry in Mexico.

Empirical contributions

The most relevant and evident empirical contributions to knowledge are related to my analysis of the current situation of LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. Here, I have drawn from a range of new data to show that in Mexico the LGBTQ field is shaped by unequal gender relations. It cannot simply be assumed that the LGBTQ community is conscious about unequal power relations related to gender just because they experience unequal power relations related to their sexuality. This is because, as Moreno and Pichardo (2006) explain, challenging heterosexuality does not always mean challenging the sex/gender system. Though it is important for us to recognise here that both systems need to be challenged, as lesbian separatist scholars such as Rich (1980) and Witting (1992), as well as Butler (1990), all show in different ways, heterosexuality is part of the system of sex/gender oppression. Therefore, as this thesis has shown, in Mexico, the more visible NGOs are related to gay men and the agenda around HIV/AIDS, while NGOs which advocate for lesbians are relatively invisible and difficult to sustain.

This situation is better explained if we think in terms of a hierarchy of identities within the LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico, which is the second empirical contribution which this thesis makes. The empirical chapters show that the identities at the top of the hierarchy are related to the performance of masculinity (gay men), while those at the bottom of the hierarchy are the bodies that perform femininity (lesbians and bisexual women). Despite the fact that gay masculinity and lesbian femininity are not hegemonic, these bodies are still socialised as men and women and their social relationships are permeated by this gendered socialisation. This enables gay men, as compared to lesbian and bisexual women, to better negotiate their performance in public spaces, given that their performance in that sphere suits better with the heteropatriarchal norms of the public/private sphere. In addition to this, these spaces also highlight the structural economic advantage that gay men have over lesbians and bisexual women. These dynamics help to produce the invisibilisation and ghettoisation of lesbians

and bisexual women. Hence, this hierarchy is shaped by different factors that are embedded in broader society – systems of oppression such as phallocentricity, heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity and homonormativity – that have been identified by scholars to make sense of gender inequality and the oppression of sexualities throughout multiple spaces in society. Building on my empirical work, I have used these theoretical concepts to develop an understanding of the dynamics between LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. These theoretical contributions are outlined in the following sub-section.

Theoretical contribution

The thesis has drawn on a wide body of theory to explain the different inequalities that women, and specifically lesbians and bisexual women, experience because of their gender and sexual orientation. These were scrutinised and discussed in more length in the theoretical chapter. Specifically, I used a range of feminist and queer theories to make sense of the different oppressions that lesbians and bisexual women suffer in the specific context of Mexico. From those theories, I took the different systems of oppression. Phallocentricity, which refers to the system that privileges bodies that own a phallus. Heteropatriarchy, which works as an example of phallocentricity, given that it is a system that is structured to benefit males, who are labelled as men. Thirdly I used the concept of heteronormativity, understood as rules to privilege bodies and heterosexual relationships, or to be more specific homonormativity, which reinforces, mirrors and copies heteronormative practices, albeit transgressing these dynamics to some extent, regarding different aspects embodied in identity which organise social relations, such as race, class and gender. For instance, being an indigenous lesbian, who is achieving visibility is out of the imaginaries of homonormativity; identities that do not fit in the neoliberal system and are distant from the classic gay occidental man or high-class femme lesbians, challenges homonormative dynamics. I combined them to make sense of the specific situation of lesbians and bisexual women in the LGBTQ arena in Mexico. This combination of specific

theories and concepts represents a novel theoretical contribution to our understanding of the unequal power dynamics within the LGBTQ community in Mexico, and potentially beyond that.

The organisation of those concepts as systems of oppression can help to grasp the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women in LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico. But they also have the potential to highlight problems within those spaces that tend to be considered safe spaces for women, again taking account here of the misleading assumption that the LGBTQ community is regularly aware of the broader gender inequalities existing, in this specific case, in Mexico. Consequently, the theoretical framework I have used, around heteropatriarchy/heteronormativity and homonormativity, can be applied to make sense of power relations in different instances where gender and sexuality dynamics are played out within non-heterosexual spaces. Thus, the thesis helps to make sense of the unequal power relations that hold back non-heterosexual women from being able to participate in civil society organisations, raise their voices, highlight their needs and, fight for their rights. This contribution to knowledge can be used to help find new paths and strategies for these women to achieve their goals through civil society organisations. This leads us to the final contribution of this research, which is a more normative one.

Normative contribution

One of the main findings from this research is that lesbians and bisexual women do not feel that they belong to the LGBTQ arena and therefore must find their own spaces. However, those spaces are also invisible, and the women who occupy them do not have good access to resources, due to their invisibility. Therefore, in the discussion chapter, I have recommended new strategies or paths which lesbians and bisexual women could take to find ways of being more visible. These should involve challenging the gender norms that present their work as an act of love, therefore as unpaid, whilst at the same time challenging the market rules imposed on them with a gendered perspective. This can

allow them to find autonomous ways of creating their own spaces for (trans and cis) women. In addition, this contribution aims to generate awareness of new paths, not only among lesbians and bisexual women, but also among the perpetrators of the inequalities which lesbians and bisexual women are forced to suffer – the sponsors and LGBTQ NGOs that are the most visible – to look for spaces and agendas for lesbians and bisexual women. These normative recommendations represent an innovative contribution to the existing knowledge of the situations and experiences that lesbians and bisexual women face when working in the LGBTQ field in Mexico.

Towards new paths

After addressing the novelties of this research, it is crucial also to highlight the limitations that I faced in the process of constructing the thesis. Some of these can help to open up new lines of enquiry, important unresolved questions and new paths for future research not only in Mexico, but also in the global LGBTQ arena. In these respects I hope these can be used to challenge the gender inequalities, as well as a number of other specific matters that I was not able to cover in this research.

Limitations

While the theoretical framework, as well as the research design and approach, was chosen as the best combination of approaches to investigate and answer the main research questions, it is necessary to recognise that there are some limitations with the approach I have taken. First, the research, which is qualitative and has its basis in feminist and queer studies, limits some aspects of the findings such as the ability to generalise, given that the data collected and the interpretation of this data, belongs to a specific case restricted by a socio-geographical region, as well as a specific time in history. Furthermore, the selection of NGOs which I choose to investigate, could represent a limitation,

because not all the organisations I approached agreed to participate in the research, adding a further layer of problem to the matter of generalisation.

Second, given that the arena of LGBTQ NGOs in Mexico is a sphere which contains different views and perspectives it is important to mention that the focus of my research represents only the experiences of lesbians and bisexual women and how they negotiate the gender dynamics in those spaces. Therefore, the point of view of sponsors, for example, and the specific dynamics of the allocation of resources is out of the scope of this research. In addition, an alternative perspective exists which I would like to point out here, namely that of trans people. Although my research comprises lesbians and bisexual women, there were no women participants in the study who identified themselves as trans. Therefore, I do not have the data here to understand, explain, analyse and discuss the specific gender dynamics that trans women experience within the LGBTQ NGOs, and in general within the LGBTQ field in Mexico. Regarding trans men, this identity is entirely outside of the limits of my research, because I am only focused on lesbians and bisexual women. Nonetheless, these limitations could form the basis of future research, as I will explain in the following subsection.

Future research

As I addressed in the earlier section on the contributions to scholarship, one of the major outcomes of this thesis is the identification of a hierarchy of identities within the LGBTQ arena, opening a door for some future research which could analyse each of the identities and how they negotiate gender dynamics in the wider LGBTQ arena in Mexico**.** In particular, from the findings of this thesis, and the theories that underpin it, it is interesting to note that the role of bisexuality has an embedded gender element. In this sense, my analysis of the experiences of bisexual women exposes that the way of negotiating sexuality for bisexual people, both men and women varies according to gender, their self-identification as bisexuals and how their sexual orientation is perceived by other people within the

LGBTQ sphere**.** Furthermore, as I mentioned in the limitations section above, the ways in which trans people negotiate gender dynamics are not the same as the strategies used by bisexual, lesbians and gay people; consequently there is considerable space to develop research on how these dynamics differ, not only in Mexico, but in general in the wider LGBTQ arena of activism, globally.

Moreover, as this research only looks at a study of Mexico, the model I have used here could be utilised to develop similar research in other socio-geographical contexts to make a comparison between the way in which gender and sexuality dynamics are experienced and negotiated in Mexico and other countries, or regions. In a similar vein, the assemblage of concepts and theorisations I have used here to challenge the LGBTQ arena in Mexico could also be used to make sense of other LGBTQ arenas. In addition, while my research did not account for generational differences relating to lesbian and bisexual women's experiences of LGBTQ NGOs, it is likely that there are generational differences in the way the shifting discursive terrain in sexuality politics is interpreted and the extent to which it is accepted. In particular, the different understandings, acceptance and recognition of using 'queer', as an approach and a unit of identification is, to some extent, influenced by the age of the participants. As such, this presents an opportunity for further research into the generational factor, exploring how people of the LGBTQ community accept or reject 'queer', and how it influences gender and sexuality dynamics in this sphere. Finally, the possibility of conducting research into the influence of other actors, such as the state or the private sponsors, on the ways in which resources and identities are organised, prioritised and hierarchized, causing unequal power relations, could help to provide a more complete picture of what is happening in the NGO arena.

Personal reflections

Finally, undertaking this doctoral research as a full-time student in a foreign country working with a second language has represented an enormous challenge as an early researcher and as a person. I consider that being involved for four years in the same enormous project that a doctoral thesis implies, has been the most immersive professional and personal experience I have ever encountered. Doing research within feminist gender and sexuality scholarship also entails a political position within which your own subjectivity is also bound, because generally the research that you are doing has a personal impact to some extent. However, at the same time, doing research related to social matters that you have experienced or are familiar with is exciting and encouraging. Working hand in hand with Mexican lesbians and bisexual women, hearing their experiences and being able to let their voices resonate is also a great responsibility. Consequently, doing this doctoral thesis also carries with it hope and expectations towards a better life for non-normative female sexualities in countries like Mexico where there is still no access to basic human rights for the LGBTQ community, especially the NGOs and participants that were part of this investigation, who I would like to thank, again because they are the heart of this research, and I hope that this work can have some value toward their future work.

References

- Abelove, H., Barale, M., and Halperin, D. (eds) (1993) *The lesbian and gay studies reader*. New York London: Routledge.

- Acker, J. (1990) 'Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations', *Gender and Society*, 4(2), pp. 139-158.

- Adler, S., and Brenner, J. (1992) 'Gender and space: lesbians and gay men in the city', *International journal of urban and regional research,* 16(1), pp. 24-34.

- Ahmed, S. (2014). *Cultural politics of emotion*: Edinburgh: University Press.

- Alcorro Heredia, X. (2019). *Entretejiendo hilos lesbofeministas: Aproximaciones a las acciones teórico-políticas de ocho lesbofeministas del Abya Yala*. Master dissertation. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

- Alder, G. S., and Quist, D. M. (2014). 'Rethinking love at the office: Antecedents and consequences of coworker evaluations of workplace romances'. *Human Resource Management*, 53(3), pp. 329-351.

- Alvarez, S. E. (1998) 'Feminismos latinoamericanos'. *Estudos feministas*, pp. 265-284.

- Alvarez, S. E. (1999) 'Advocating feminism: the Latin American feminist NGO"boom"'. *International feminist journal of politics*, 1(2), pp. 181-209.

- Alvarez, S. E. (2009). 'Beyond NGO-ization?: Reflections from Latin America' *Development*, 52(2), pp. 175-184.

- Amuchástegui, A. (2007) 'Subjective processes of sexuality and citizenship in Mexico: Gender and the authorization of desire', *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 4(3), pp. 6 - 18.

- Angelides, S. (2001). *A history of bisexuality,* Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

- Angelides, S. (2006). 'Historicizing (bi) sexuality: A rejoinder for gay/lesbian studies, feminism, and queer theory'. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52(1-2), pp. 125-158.

- Anzaldúa, G. (1990). *Haciendo Caras/making face, making soul: creative and critical perspectives by women of color*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute.

- Arboleda Ríos, P. (2011) '¿Ser o estar "queer" en Latinoamérica? El devenir emancipador en: Lemebel, Perlongher y Arenas. *Íconos: Revista de Ciencias Sociales*. 39(1), pp. 111-121.

- Armstrong, E. (1995) 'Traitors to the cause? Understanding the lesbian/gay "bisexuality debates."'. *Bisexual politics: Theories, queries, and visions*, pp. 199-217.

- Aslaksen, I. (2002). 'Gender constructions and the possibility of a generous economic actor'. *Hypatia*, 17(2), pp. 118-132.

- Ault, A. (1994). 'Hegemonic discourse in an oppositional community: Lesbian feminists and bisexuality' *Critical Sociology,* 20(3), pp. 107-122.

- Aydemir, M. (2011). Introduction: Indiscretions at the sex/culture divide' *Indiscretions* 22(1), pp. 9-30.

- Ayres, R., and Clark, D. (1998) 'Capitalism, industrialisation and development in Latin America: the dependency paradigm revisited', *Capital and Class*, 22(1), pp. 89-118.

- Badgett, M. L., and Folbre, N. (2001) 'Assigning care: Gender norms and economic outcomes' *Women, gender and work: What is equality and how do we get there*, pp. 327-345.

- Barker, M., Yockney, J., Richards, C., Jones, R., Bowes-Catton, H., and Plowman, T. (2012). 'Guidelines for researching and writing about bisexuality', *Journal of Bisexuality*, 12(3), pp. 376-392.

- Barrett, M., and Phillips, A. (1992*). Destabilizing theory: Contemporary feminist debates*: Standford: Stanford University Press.

- Becker, G. S. (1985). 'Human capital, effort, and the sexual division of labor'. *Journal of labor economics*, 3(1, Part 2), pp. S33-S58.

- Bell, D., Binnie, J., Cream, J., and Valentine, G. (1994) 'All hyped up and no place to go' *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 1(1), 31-47.

- Bell, D. J. (1991). Insignificant others: lesbian and gay geographies. *Area,* pp. 323-329.

- Bell, D. and Valentine, G. (1995). 'Orientations'. In Bell, D., and Valentine, G. (eds) *Mapping Desire: Geographies of sexualities*. London: Routledge. pp. 1 - 27.

- Bevir, M. (2010*). Encyclopedia of Political Theory*: A-E: Sage.

- Binnie, J. (1995). 'Trading places: consumption, sexuality and the production of queer space'. In Bell, D., and Valentine, G. (eds) *Mapping desire: Geographies of sexualities*, London: Routledge, pp. 182-199.

- Boserup, E. (2007). *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (Second ed.). London: Earthscan.

- Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Masculine domination*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Bower, T. (2013). Bisexual women, feminist politics. In N. S. Tucker, *Bisexual politics: Theories, queries, and visions*. London: Routledge, pp. 99-107.

- Boyd, C. (2010). 'The debate over the prohibition of romance in the workplace' *Journal of Business Ethics*, 97(2), pp. 325-338.

- Brighenti, A. (2007) 'Visibility: A category for the social sciences' *Current sociology*, 55(3), 323-342.

- Brouwer, D. (1998). 'The precarious visibility politics of self-stigmatization: The case of HIV/AIDS tattoos' *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 18(2), pp. 114-136.

- Brown, G. (2009) 'Thinking beyond homonormativity: performative explorations of diverse gay economies' *Environment and Planning A,* 41(6), pp. 1496-1510.

- Brown, G. (2012) 'Homonormativity: A metropolitan concept that denigrates "ordinary" gay lives' *Journal of Homosexuality*, 59(7), pp. 1065-1072.

- Browne, K. (2006) 'Challenging queer geographies' *Antipode*, 38(5), pp. 885-893.

- Browne, K., and Nash, C. J. (2010). *Queer methods and methodologies: Intersecting queer theories and social science research*. Abingdon/ New York: Taylor and Francis.

- Brumley, K. M. (2010) 'Understanding Mexican NGOs: Goals, strategies, and the local context'. *Qualitative Sociology*, 33(3), pp. 389-414.

- Bryman, A. (2015). *Social Research Methods (5 ed.)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Buss, D. E. (2004) 'Finding the Homosexual in Women's Rights: The Christian Right in International Politics' *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 6(2), pp. 257-284.

- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble*. New York/London: Routledge.

- Butler, J. (1993). 'Critically queer'. *GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay studies*, 1(1), pp. 17-32.

- Butler, J. (1994). 'Against proper objects: Introduction'. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 6(2), pp. 1-26.

- Butler, J. (1997) *Excitable speech: A politics of the performative*. New York: Routledge.

- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. London: Routledge.

- Butler, J. (2011). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. London: Routledge.

- Butler, J. (2019). 'Gender in Translation: Beyond Monolingualism'. *philoSOPHIA*, 9(1), pp. 1 - 25.

- Califia, P. (2006) 'Manliness'. In S. Stryker and S. Whittle (Eds.), *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge.

- Callis, A. S. (2009). 'Playing with Butler and Foucault: Bisexuality and queer theory' *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), pp. 213-233.

- Card, C. (1990). 'Pluralist lesbian separatism'. In J. Allen, *Lesbian Philosophies and Cultures: Issues in Philosophical Historiography*. New York: State University of New York Press, pp. 125-141.

- Carrier, J. M. (1985) 'Mexican male bisexuality' *Journal of Homosexuality,* 11(1-2), pp. 75-86.

- Carrillo, H. (2007). 'Imagining modernity: Sexuality, policy and social change in Mexico' *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 4(3), pp. 74-91.

- Castro, Y. M. (2010) 'la guerra contra la autonomía política del movimiento lésbico feminista o el neopatriarcado' *VIII Encuentro de lesbianas feministas de América Latina y el Caribe*. Guatemala, 10-14 October.

- Chen, Y.-Z. (2014). 'How to Become a Feminist Activist after the Institutionalization of the Women's Movements: The Generational Development of Feminist Identity and Politics in Mexico City'. *Frontiers: A Journal Of Women Studies*, 35(3), pp. 183-206.

- Christensen, H. S. (2011). 'Political activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or political participation by other means?' *First Monday,* 16(2).

- Clarke, G. (1998) 'Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and politics in the developing world' *Political studies*, 46(1), pp. 36-52.

- Cohen, C. J. (1997) 'Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens. The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 3(1), pp. 437-465.

- Colley, H. (2003). 'Learning to do emotional labour: class, gender and the reform of habitus in the training of nursery nurses' *Experiential, Community and Work based: Researching Learning outside the Academy*. University of Huddersfield, 27th - 29th June. Glasgow: Unpublished.

- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California press CA.

- Connell, R. (2016) 'Masculinities in global perspective: Hegemony, contestation, and changing structures of power', *Theory and Society*, 45(4), pp. 303-318.

- Cornwall, A. (2004). 'Introduction: New democratic spaces? The politics and dynamics of institutionalised participation'. *IDS Bulletin*, 35(2), pp. 1-10.

- Cornwall, A., and Jolly, S. (2006). 'Introduction: Sexuality Matters'. *IDS Bulletin*, 37(5), pp. 1-11.

- Cornwall, A., Harrison, E., and Whitehead, A. (2007). 'Gender myths and feminist fables: The struggle for interpretive power in gender and development'. *Development and Change*, 38(1), pp. 1-20.

- Cornwall, A., Correa, S., and Jolly, S. (Eds.). (2013). *Development with a body: sexuality, human rights and development*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

- Corrêa, S. (2002) 'Sexual rights: much has been said, much remains to be resolved' *Sexuality, Health and Gender Seminar*, School of Public Health, Columbia University.

- Corrêa, S., and Parker, R. (2004). 'Sexuality, human rights, and demographic thinking: Connections and disjunctions in a changing world'. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 1(1), pp. 15-38.

- Corrêa, S., Petchesky, R., and Parker, R. (2008). *Sexuality, health and human rights*. London: Routledge.

- Corrales, J. (2015) 'The politics of LGBT rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: Research agendas'. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, 100 pp. 53-62.

- Crowder, D. G. (2007). From the straight mind to queer theory: Implications for political movement. *GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay studies*, 13(4), pp. 489-503.

- De Beauvoir, S. (2010). *The second sex*. Knopf.

- de la Dehesa, R. (2010*). Queering the public sphere in Mexico and Brazil: Sexual rights movements in emerging democracies*: United States: Durham: Duke University Press.

- Davis, D.R. (2002) '(Love is) the ability of not knowing: Feminist experience of the impossible in ethical singularity'. *Hypatia* 17(2), pp. 145-161.

- Diller, A., Houston, B., Morgan, K. P., and Ayim, M. (1996). *The Gender Question in Education: Theory. Pedagogy, and Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press.

- Doan, P. L. (2010). The tyranny of gendered spaces–reflections from beyond the gender dichotomy. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 17(5), 635-654.

- Duggan, L. (2002). 'The new homonormativity: The sexual politics of neoliberalism'. In R. Casstronovo and D. Nelson (eds) *Materializing democracy: Toward a revitalized cultural politics*, Durham/London: Duke University Press, pp. 175-194.

- Duggan, L. (2012). *The twilight of equality?: Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. New York: Beacon Press.

- Duncan, N. (1996). 'Renegotiating gender and sexuality in public and private spaces'. In N. Duncan, *BodySpace: Destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*. London: Routledge, pp. 135-152.

- Enloe, C. (2014). *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. London: Pandora.

- Eliason, M. (2000). 'Bi-negativity: The stigma facing bisexual men'. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1(2-3), pp. 137-154.

- Elshtain, J. B. (1995). *Women and war*: University of Chicago Press.

- Epps, B. (2008). 'Retos, riesgos, pautas y promesas de la teoría queer'. *Revista Iberoamericana,* 74(225), pp. 897-920.

- Erickson-Schroth, L., and Mitchell, J. (2009). 'Queering queer theory, or why bisexuality matters'. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), pp. 297-315.

- Ewig, C. (1999). 'The strengths and limits of the NGO women's movement model: Shaping Nicaragua's democratic institutions'. *Latin American Research Review*, pp. 75-102.

- Falconí, D. (2014). 'De lo queer/cuir/cuy (r) en América Latina: Accidentes y malos entendidos en la narrativa de Ena Lucía Portela'. *Mitologías hoy: Revista de pensamiento, crítica y estudios literarios latinoamericanos*.(10), pp. 95-113.

- Falconí, D., Castellanos, S., and Viteri, M. A. (2014). *Resentir lo queer en América Latina: diálogos desde/con el Sur*. Madrid/Barcelona: Egales Editorial.

- Falú, A. (2005). *Lesbianas y discriminación laboral en América Latina: Con énfasis especial en Colombia, Bolivia, Brasil, Honduras y México*. UNIFEM.

- Fassinger, R. E. (1995). 'From invisibility to integration: Lesbian identity in the workplace'. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 44(2), pp. 148-167.

- Fereday, J., and Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). 'Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development'. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 5(1), pp. 80-92.

- Figari, C. (2010). 'El movimiento LGBT en América Latina: institucionalizaciones oblicuas. *Movilizaciones, protestas e identidades colectivas en la Argentina del bicentenario*, pp. 225 - 240.

- Fisher, W. F. (1997). 'Doing good? The politics and antipolitics of NGO practices' *Annual review of anthropology*, 26(1), pp. 439-464.

- Falquet, J. (2014). 'Las «Feministas autónomas» latinoamericanas y caribeñas: veinte años de disidencias'. *Universitas humanística*, 78(78), pp. 39 -63.

- Foucault, M., and Miskowiec, J. (1986). 'Of other spaces' *diacritics*, 16(1), pp. 22-27.

- Foucault, M. (1990) *The history of sexuality: An introduction, volume I*. New York: Vintage.

- Franklin, A. J. (1999). 'Visibility is important too: Viewing the larger systemic model'. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 27(6), pp. 820-826.

- Friedman, E. J. (2009). 'Gender, sexuality and the Latin American left: Testing the transformation' *Third World Quarterly*, 30(2), pp. 415-433.

- Friedman, E. J. (2010). Lesbians in (Cyber) Space. In M. Petcheny Corrales (Ed.), *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America*. Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 312- 335.

- Fritz, V., and Menocal, A. R. (2006). '(Re) building developmental states: from theory to practice' *Overseas Development Institute*.

- Fuentes Ponce, A. (2015). *Decidir sobre el propio cuerpo: una historia reciente del movimiento lésbico en México.* México: La Cifra editorial.

- Fuss, D. (2013). *Inside/out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*. New York/London: Routledge.

- Gammon, M. A., and Isgro, K. L. (2006). 'Troubling the canon: Bisexuality and queer theory'. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52(1-2), pp. 159-184.

- Garber, M. B. (1995). *Vice versa: Bisexuality and the eroticism of everyday life*: Simon and Schuster.

- Garcia, L. (2009). 'Now why do you want to know about that? Heteronormativity, sexism, and racism in the sexual (mis) education of Latina youth'. *Gender and Society*, 23(4), pp. 520-541.

- Gargallo, F. (2009). A propósito de lo queer en América Latina. *Blanco Móvil* (112-113).

- Ghosh, A. (2015). 'LGBTQ Activist Organizations as 'Respectably Queer' in India: Contesting a Western View' *Gender, Work and Organization*, 22(1), pp. 51-66.

- Ghosh, S. (2009). 'NGOs as political institutions'. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 44(5), 475-495.

- González Ortuño, G. (2016). 'Teorías de la disidencia sexual: de contextos populares a usos elitistas. La teoría queer en América latina frente a las y los pensadores de disidencia sexogenérica' *De Raíz Diversa. Revista Especializada en Estudios Latinoamericanos*, 3(5), pp. 179-200.

- González Villarreal, R. (2002). 'De la denuncia a la normalización: una agenda del movimiento gay'. *Una exposición, varias exposiciones.*

- Gutek, B. A. (1985). *Sex and the workplace*: San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female Masculinity* Durham: Duke University Press.

- Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies. Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York Press.

- Hall, D. E., and Jagose, A. (2012). *The Routledge queer studies reader*. Oxford: Routledge.

- Hall, D., Jagose, A., Bebell, A. and Porter, S. (ed.) (2013). *The Routledge queer studies reader*. Oxford: Routledge.

- Halperin, D. M. (2003). 'The normalization of queer theory'. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 45(2-4), 339-343.

- Hardill, I. and Baines, S. (2003) 'Doing one's duty? Voluntary work and the'new economy". *Taylor and Francis,* pp. 102 – 108.

- Harding, S. G. (Ed.). (1987). *Feminism and methodology: Social science issues*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

- Harding, S. (2016). *Whose science? Whose knowledge?: Thinking from women's lives*. New York: Cornell University Press.

- Hartman, J. E. (2006). 'Another kind of "Chilly Climate" The Effects of lesbian separatism on bisexual women's identity and community'. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 5(4), pp. 61-76.

- Held, V. (2002). 'Care and the extension of markets'. *Hypatia*, 17(2), pp. 19-33.

- Hemmings, C. (1997). 'From landmarks to spaces: Mapping the territory of a bisexual genealogy'. In G. B. Ingram, A; Bouthillete, and Y. Retter (Eds.), *Queers in space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*. Seattle: Bay Press, pp. 147 – 162.

- Hennessy, R. (1994). 'Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture'. *Cultural Critique* (29), pp. 31-76.

- Hinojosa, C. (2001). 'Gritos y susurros: Una historia sobre la presencia pública de las feministas lesbianas'. *Desacatos* (6), pp. 177-186.

- Homans, G. C. (2013). *The human group*. New York: Routledge.

- hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From Center to Margin*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

- Horan, S. M., and Chory, R. M. (2013). 'Relational implications of gay and lesbian workplace romances: Understanding trust, deception, and credibility'. *The Journal of Business Communication* (1973), 50(2),170-189.

- Humphries, M., and Metcalf, A. (1990). *The sexuality of men*: Pluto Press.

- Ingram, G. B. (1993). Queers in space: towards a theory of landscape and sexual orientation. *Queer Sites' Conference Toronto*. Toronto, May.

- Ingram, G. B., Bouthillette, A.-M., and Retter, Y. (1997). 'Lost in space: Queer theory and community activism at the Fin-de-Millenaire'. In G. B. Ingram, A.-M. Bouthillette, and Y. Retter (Eds.), *Queers in space: Communities, public places, sites of resistance*. Seattle: Bay Press, pp. 3-16.

- Israel, T., and Mohr, J. J. (2004). 'Attitudes toward bisexual women and men: Current research, future directions' *Journal of Bisexuality*, 4(1-2), pp. 117-134.

- Jackson, C., and Pearson, R. (Eds.). (1998). *Feminist visions of development*. London/New York: Routledge.

- Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: An introduction*. New York: NYU Press.

- Jaquette, J. S. (2017). 'Women/gender and development: the growing gap between theory and practice'. *Studies in Comparative International development*, 52(2), pp. 242-260.

- Jeffreys, S. (1999). 'Bisexual politics: A superior form of feminism?' *Women's Studies International Forum,* 22(3), pp. 273-285.

- Jennings, R. (2016). 'The boy-child in Australian lesbian feminist discourse and community'. *Cultural and Social History*, 13(1), pp. 63-79.

- Jennings, R. (2018). 'Creating feminist culture: Australian rural lesbian-separatist communities in the 1970s and 1980s'. *Journal of Women's History*, 30(2), pp. 88-111.

- Johnson, T. A. (2016). 'LGBTI rights: the international context'. In J. Steans and D. Tepe-Belfrage (Eds.), *Handbook on Gender in World Politics*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. pp. 153 – 161.

- Jolly, S. (2000). ''Queering' development: Exploring the links between same-sex sexualities, gender, and development'. *Gender and Development*, 8(1), pp. 78-88.

- Jones, A. (2009). 'Queer heterotopias: Homonormativity and the future of queerness'. *InterAlia: Pismo poświęcone studiom queer* (4).

- Kamat, S. (2003). 'NGOs and the new democracy'. *Harvard International Review*, 25(1), pp. 65- 69.

- Kamat, S. (2004). 'The privatization of public interest: theorizing NGO discourse in a neoliberal era' *Review of international political economy*, 11(1), pp. 155-176.

- Kapoor, I. (2015). 'The queer third world'. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(9), pp. 1611-1628.

- Knopp, L. (1995). 'Sexuality and urban space: a framework for analysis'. In Bell, D., and Valentine, G. (eds) *Mapping Desire: Geographies of sexualities*. London: Routledge, pp. 149 - 161. London: Routledge.

- Kollman, K., and Waites, M. (2009). 'The global politics of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights: an introduction'. *Contemporary politics*, 15(1), pp. 1-17.

- Kornak, J. (2015). *Queer as a political concept*. PhD dissertation, University of Helsinki. Available at: http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-51-0562-2 (accessed: November 2019)

- Kristofferson, K., White, K., and Peloza, J. (2014). 'The nature of slacktivism: How the social observability of an initial act of token support affects subsequent prosocial action'. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(6), pp. 1149-1166.

- Larrain, J. (2013). *Theories of development: Capitalism, colonialism and dependency*: John Wiley and Sons.

- Lather, P., and Pierre, E. A. (2013). 'Post-qualitative research', *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 26(6), pp. 629-633.

- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Lewis, P., and Simpson, R. (2010). 'Introduction: Theoretical Insights into the Practices of Revealing and Concealing Gender within Organizations'. In P. Lewis and R. Simpson (Eds.), *Revealing and Concealing gender. Issues of visibility in organizations.* London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 1 - 22.

- Lind, A. (2008). 'Gendered Paradoxes: Women's Movements, State Restructuring, and Global Development in Ecuador'. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 11(1), pp. 240- 242.

- Lind, A. (2009). Governing intimacy, struggling for sexual rights: Challenging heteronormativity in the global development industry. *Development,* 52(1), pp. 34-42.

- Lind, A. (2010). *Development, sexual rights and global governance*. London: Routledge.

- Lind, A., and Argüello Pazmiño, S. (2009). 'Ciudadanías y sexualidades en América Latina', *Íconos: revista de ciencias sociales. Ciudadanías y sexualidades en América Latina,* 35, pp. 13-18.

- Lind, A. C. (2013). 'Heteronormativity and sexuality'. In G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, and S. L. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of gender and politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 189 - 213.

- Lingel, J. (2009). 'Adjusting the borders: Bisexual passing and queer theory'. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), pp. 381-405.

- Little, J. (1997). 'Constructions of rural women's voluntary work. Gender, Place and Culture' *A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 4(2), pp. 197-210.

- Lopes de Souza, M. (2013). 'NGOs and social movements' *Convergences and divergences. City*, 17(2), pp. 258-261.

- López J. A. and Hincapié, S. (2015) 'Campos de acción colectiva y las ONG de derechos humanos: Herramientas teóricas para su análisis'. *Sociológica (México),* 30(85), pp. 9-37.

- López, J. A. (2017). 'Acción colectiva a nivel subnacional. Los derechos LGBT en México'. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (104), pp. 69-88.

- Lorde, A. (2007). *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, New York: Random House Digital, Inc.

- Loutfi, M. F. (2001). *Women, Gender and Work: What Is Equality and How Do We Get There?* Geneva: ERIC.

- MacDowall, L. (2009). 'Historicising contemporary bisexuality', *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(1), pp. 3-15.

- MacKinnon, C. A. (1982). 'Feminism, Marxism, method, and the state: An agenda for theory'. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 7(3), pp. 515-544.

- Mainiero, L. A. (1986). 'A review and analysis of power dynamics in organizational romances' *Academy of Management Review*, 11(4), pp. 750-762.

- Malnis, C. M. (2019). 'Cartografía del pensamiento lesbo-feminista. La aldea como forma de acceder al mundo: desde Mendoza hacia una genealogía teórica lesbo-feminista del sur' *La ventana. Revista de estudios de género*, 6(50), pp. 260-281.

- Marchand, M. H., and Parpart, J. L. (Eds.). (1995). *Feminism/postmodernism/development*. London/New York: Routledge.

- Marchand, M. H. (2003). 'Latin American women speak on development: Are we listening yet?'. In *Feminism/postmodernism/development*. London/New York: Routledge, pp. 70-86.

- Marchand M. H. and Runyan, A. S. (2010) *Gender and global restructuring: Sightings, sites and resistances*. Oxon/New York: Routledge.

- Martínez Carmona, C. (2015). *La institucionalización del movimiento lésbico, gay, bisexual, transexual, transgénero y travesti en la Ciudad de México* (1978-2013). PhD. Dissertation. Flacso México.

- Martínez Carmona, C., González Villareal, R., Mogrovejo, N. and Sandoval Rebollo, E. (2020) 'Movimientos LGBT en México', in Oliver, G.(ed) *Estado del conocimiento de los movimientos sociales en México. Volumen 1*. México: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional.

- Martínez, L. (2008). 'Transformación y renovación: los estudios lésbicos-gays y queer latinoamericanos' *Revista Iberoamericana*, 74(225), pp. 861-876.

- McGee, M. J., and Kampwirth, K. (2015) 'The Co-optation of LGBT Movements in Mexico and Nicaragua: Modernizing Clientelism?'. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 57(4), pp. 51-73.

- Mercer, R. K. (2004). *Politicizing sexuality: An investigation of LGBT rights and the NGO sector in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. ISP Collection.

- Metcalf, A., and Humphries, M. (1985). *The sexuality of men* London/Sindney: Pluto Press.

- Milbrath, L. (1965) *Political Participation*. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co.

- Millett, K. (1977). *Sexual politics*. London: Virago.

- Miraftab, F. (1997). 'Flirting with the enemy: Challenges faced by NGOs in development and empowerment'. *Habitat international,* 21(4), pp. 361-375.

- Mogrovejo, N. (2000). *Un amor que se atrevió a decir su nombre: la lucha de las lesbianas y su relación con los movimientos homosexual y feminista en América Latina*. México: Plaza y Valdés.

- Mogrovejo, N. (2008). 'Diversidad sexual, un concepto problemático'. *Perspectiva: Trabajo social UNAM (*18), pp. 62 -72

- Mogrovejo N. (2010) 'Algunos aportes del lesbofeminismo al feminismo latinoamericano'. In Y. Espinosa Miñoso (Ed) *Aproximaciones críticas a las prácticas teórico-políticas del feminismo latinoamericano*, Buenos Aires: En la Frontera, pp. 161-169.

- Mogrovejo, N. (2011). 'Lo Queer en América Latina ¿Lucha identitaria, posidentitaria, asimilacionista o neocolonoial?'. In D. Balderston and A. Matute Castro (Eds.) *Cartografías queer: sexualidades y activismo LGTB en América Latina*. Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, Pittsburgh University.

- Mohr, J. J., and Rochlen, A. B. (1999). 'Measuring attitudes regarding bisexuality in lesbian, gay male, and heterosexual populations'. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 46(3), pp. 353.

- Momsen, J. (2003). *Gender, Planning and Development*. London: Routledge.

- Monsiváis, C. (2011) *Que se abra esa puerta: Crónicas y ensayos sobre la diversidad sexual*. México: Grupo Planeta.

- Moreno, A. (2008). 'The politics of visibility and the GLTTTBI movement in Argentina'. *Feminist review*, 89(1), pp. 138-143.

- Moreno, A., and Pichardo, J. I. (2006). 'Homonormatividad y existencia sexual: Amistades peligrosas entre género y sexualidad'. *AIBR: Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana*, 1(1), pp. 143-156.

- Muñoz Márquez, L. M. (2014). 'A vueltas con las ONG: perspectivas teóricas sobre su papel en el proceso político'. *Revista Mexicana de Análisis Político y Administración Pública* 3(2), pp. 277-297.

- Namaste, K. (1994). 'The politics of inside/out: Queer theory, poststructuralism, and a sociological approach to sexuality'. *Sociological Theory*, pp. 220-231.

- Narayanaswamy, L. (2014). 'NGOs and Feminisms in Development: Interrogating the 'Southern Women's NGO''. *Geography Compass*, 8(8), pp. 576-589.

- Nast, H. J. (2002). 'Queer patriarchies, queer racisms, international'. *Antipode*, 34(5), pp. 874-909.

- Nelson, J. A. (2001). 'Labour, Gender and The Economic/Social Divide'. *Women, Gender Work*, pp. 369.

- Nelson, J. A., and England, P. (2002). 'Feminist philosophies of love and work'. *Hypatia,* 17(2), pp. 1-18.

- Neuman, W. L. (2013). *Social Research Methods*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

- Neysmith, S., and Reitsma-Street, M. (2000). 'Valuing unpaid work in the third sector: The case of community resource centres'. *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de Politiques*, 26(3), pp. 331-346.

- Nicholson, P. (1997). *The second wave: A reader in feminist theory*: Psychology Press.

- Noble, B. J. (2013). 'Our bodies are not ourselves: Tranny guys and the racialized class politics of incoherence'. In S. Stryker and A. Aizura (Eds.), *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*. New York/London: Routledge.

- Norris, P. (2007). 'Political activism: New challenges, new opportunities.' *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics*, pp. 628-652.

- Oakley, A. (1981). *Subject Women*. Oxford: Martin Robertson and Company Ltd.

- Ortner, S. B. (1972). 'Is female to male as nature is to culture?' *Feminist Studies*, 1(2), pp. 5-31.

- Osborne, R., and Molina Petit, C. (2008). 'La evolución del concepto de género: selección de textos de S de Beauvoir, K Millet, G Rubin y J Butler.' *Empiria: Revista de metodología de ciencias sociales*(15), pp. 147-182.

- Oswin, N. (2008). 'Critical geographies and the uses of sexuality: Deconstructing queer space'. *Progress in human geography*, 32(1), pp. 89-103.

- Paredes, J. (2015) 'The Neocolonial Queer' *The Global Trajectories of Queerness*. pp.229-239.

- Parpart, J. L., Rai, S. M., and Staudt, K. A. (Eds.). (2003). *Rethinking empowerment: Gender and development in a global/local world*. Routledge.

- Pearson, R., and Jackson, C. (1998). 'Introduction: Interrogating development: feminism, gender and policy. Feminist visions of development' *Gender analysis and policy*, pp. 1-16.

- Pecheny, M., and De la Dehesa, R. (2011). 'Sexualidades y políticas en América Latina: un esbozo para la discusión'. *Sexualidade e política na América Latina: histórias, interseções e paradoxos*, pp. 31-79.

- Pederzini Villarreal, C., and Parker, W. (2000). 'Género y educación en México'. *Estudios demográficos y Urbanos,* pp. 97 – 122.

- Petchesky, R. (2000a). 'Rights and needs: rethinking the connections in debates over reproductive and sexual rights'. *Health and Human Rights*, 4(2), pp. 17-29.

- Petchesky, R. (2000b). 'Sexual rights. Inventing a concept, mapping an International practice'. In R. Parker, R. M. Barbosa, and P. Aglenton (Eds.), *Framing the sexual subject: The politics of gender, sexuality, and power*. London: University of California Press, pp. 81 – 103.

- Petras, J. (1997) 'Imperialism and NGOs in Latin America', *Monthly review*, 49(7), pp. 10 - 27.

- Pierce, C. A. (1998). 'Factors Associated with Participating in a Romantic Relationship in a Work Environment'. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28(18), pp. 1712-1730.

- Pieterse, J. N. (2010). *Development theory*: Sage.

- Podmore, J. A. (2006) 'Gone 'underground'? Lesbian visibility and the consolidation of queer space in Montréal' *Social & Cultural Geography*, 7(4), pp. 595-625.

- Posa Guinea, R. M., Robledo Desh, C., and Zabala Peroni, C. (2010). 'From Invisible Subjects to Citizens'. In M. Corrales (Ed.), *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. pp. 365.

- Preciado, P. B. (2012). *"Queer", historia de una palabra.* Retrieved from http://paroledequeer.blogspot.com/201204/queer-historia-de-una-palabra-por.html

- Programa Regional sobre VIH SIDA LAC (2010) *Guía de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales que Trabajan con Poblaciones GLBT y VIH en América Latina*. PNUD.

- Purcell, D., MacArthur, K. R., and Samblanet, S. (2010). 'Gender and the glass ceiling at work'. *Sociology Compass,* 4(9), pp. 705-717.

- Purdie-Vaughns, V., and Eibach, R. P. (2008). 'Intersectional invisibility: The distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities'. *Sex Roles*, 59, pp. 377-391.

- Rahman, S. (2006). 'Development, democracy and the NGO sector: Theory and evidence from Bangladesh'. *Journal of developing societies*, 22(4), pp. 451-473.

- Rai, S. M. (2011). 'Gender and development: theoretical perspectives. In N. Visvanathan, L. Duggan, N. Wigersma, and L. Nisonoffon (Eds.), *The Women, gender and development reader*. London: Zed Books, pp. 28-37.

- Ramazanoglu, C., and Holland, J. (2002). *Feminist methodology: Challenges and choices*. Sage.

- Rand, E. J. (2013). An appetite for activism: 'The Lesbian Avengers and the queer politics of visibility'. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 36(2), pp. 121-141.

- Rathgeber, E. M. (1990). 'WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in research and practice'. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 24(4), pp. 489-502.

- Reinharz, S., and Davidman, L. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Rich, A. (1980). 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 5(4), pp. 631 - 660.

- Rivas, F. (2011). 'Diga 'queer' con la lengua afuera: Sobre las confusiones del debate latinoamericano'. *Por un feminismo sin mujeres*, pp. 59-75.

- Rivera López, K. (2009). 'El grupo editorial La Correa feminista y su relación con el Movimiento Feminista Autónomo Latinoamericano'. Master dissertation. El Colegio de México.

- Robinson, D. (2001). 'Differences in Occupational Earnings by Sex'. *Women, Gender Work*, pp. 157.

- Rubin, G. (1975). 'The traffic in women: Notes on the "political economy" of sex'. In R. Reiter (Ed.), *Toward an anthropology of women*. New York: Monthly Review Press. pp. 157 - 210.

- Rubin, G. (1984) 'Thinking sex: Notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality'. *Social perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies*; *A reader*, pp. 100-133.

- Rudy, K. (2000). 'Queer theory and feminism' *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 29(2), pp. 195-216.

- Rudy, K. (2001). 'Radical feminism, lesbian separatism, and queer theory'. *Feminist Studies*, 27(1), pp. 190.

- Rust, P.C. (2000) *Bisexuality in the United States: A social science reader*. Columbia University Press.

- Salisbury, R. H. (1975). 'Research on political participation'. *American Journal of Political Science*, pp. 323-341.

- Sánchez Olvera, A. R. (2009). Cuerpo y sexualidad, un derecho: avatares para su construcción en la diversidad sexual. *Sociológica (México)*, 24(69), pp. 101-122.

- Schilt, K. (2006). 'Just one of the guys? How transmen make gender visible at work'. *Gender and Society*, 20(4), pp. 465-490.

- Scott, C. V. (1995). *Gender and development: rethinking modernization and dependency theory*. Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.

- Scott, J. W. (1986). 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis'. *The American Historical Review*, 91(5), pp. 1053-1075.

- Sedgwick, E. K. (1995). 'Gosh, Boy George, you must be awfully secure in your masculinity!'. In M. Berger and B. W. S. Wallis (Eds.), *Constructing Masculinity*. New York: Routledge, pp. 11 - 20.

- Seidman, S. (1994). 'Queer-ing sociology, sociologizing queer theory: An introduction'. *Sociological Theory,* 12(2), pp. 166-177.

- Seidman, S. (2001) 'From identity to queer politics: Shifts in normative heterosexuality and the meaning of citizenship', *Citizenship Studies*, 5(3), pp. 321-328.

- Sen, A. (2013). 'Work and rights'. *International Labour Review*, pp. 81-92.

- Sending, O. J., and Neumann, I. (2006). 'Governance to governmentality: Analyzing NGOs, states, and power'. *International Studies Quarterly*, 50(3).

- Sheill, K. (2006). 'Sexual rights are human Rights: But how can we convince the United Nations?' *IDS Bulletin,* 37(5), pp. 40 - 45.

- Shepherd, L. (Ed.) (2015) *Gender Matters in Global Politics* (2nd ed). Abingdon: Routledge.

- Smith, N. J., and Lee, D. (2015). 'What's Queer About Political Science?'. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 17(1), pp. 49-63

- Smyth, I. (2007). 'Talking of gender: words and meanings in development organisations'. *Development in Practice*,17(4-5), pp. 582-588.

- Spargo, T. (1999). *Foucault and queer theory.* Cambridge*:* Icon books

- Spivak, G. C. (1988). *In other worlds: Essays in cultural politics*. New York: Routledge.

- Stead, V. (2013). 'Learning to deploy (in) visibility: An examination of women leaders' lived experiences'. *Management Learning*, 44(1), pp. 63-79.

- Steans, J. (2013). *Gender and international relations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Steans, J. (2015). 'Body politics: gender, sexuality and human rights'. In L. Shepherd (Ed.), Gender Matters in Global Politics (2nd ed). Abingdon: Routledge. pp. 74 – 84.

- Stein, A., and Plummer, K. (1994). "'I Can't Even Think Straight" Queer Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology'. *Sociological Theory*, 12(2), pp. 178-187.

- Steinbugler, A. C. (2005). "Visibility as privilege and danger: Heterosexual and same-sex interracial intimacy in the 21st century". *Sexualities*, 8(4), pp. 425-443.

- Stocks, T. (2015). 'To what extent have the rights of transgender people been underrealized in comparison to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer/questioning people in the United Kingdom?' *International Journal of Transgenderism,* 16(1), pp. 1-35.

- Storr, M. (2013). *Bisexuality: A critical reader*: Routledge.

- Stryker, S. (2008). 'Transgender history, homonormativity, and disciplinarity'. *Radical History Review,* pp. 145-157.

- Stryker, S., and Whittle, S. (2006). *The transgender studies reader (Vol. 1):* Taylor and Francis.

- Subrahmanian, R. (2007). 'Making sense of gender in shifting institutional contexts: some reflections on gender mainstreaming'. *IDS Bulletin*, 35(4), pp. 89-94.

- Sumner, A., and Tribe, M. A. (2008). *International development studies: Theories and methods in research and practice*. Sage.

- Syed, J. (2008) 'Societal norms and contextual emotional labor'. In Zerbe, W. J., Härtel, C. E., and Ashkanasy, N. M. (Eds.) *Emotions, ethics and decision-making (Research on Emotion in Organizations, Volume 4)*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 241-258.

- Tarrés, M. L. (1996). 'Espacios privados para la participación pública. Algunos rasgos de las ONG dedicadas a la mujer'. Estudios sociológicos, pp. 7-32.

- Tarrés, M. L. (2006). 'Nuevos nudos y desafíos en las prácticas feministas: los institutos de las mujeres en México'. *De lo privado a lo público*, 30, pp. 290-309.

- Thayer, M. (2010). 'Identity, Revolution, and Democracy'. In J. Corrales and M. Pecheny (Eds.), *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America*. Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press. pp. 144.

- Thomas, G. (2017). *How to Do Your Research Project. A Guide for Students* (3 ed.). Sage.

- Thompson, D. (1991). *Reading between the lines: A lesbian feminist critique of feminist accounts of sexuality*. Sydney: Spinifex Press.

- True, J. M. (2015). Mainstreaming gender in international institutions. In L. Shepherd (Ed.), *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A Feminist Introduction to International Relations*. Oxford: Routledge. pp. 227-239.

- Udis-Kessler, A. (2013). 'Identity/politics: A history of the bisexual movement'. In N. S. Tucker, *Bisexual politics: Theories, queries, and visions*. London: Routledge, pp 17-30.

- Ungerson, C. (1997a). 'Introduction: Women and informal care'. In C. Ungerson and M. Kember (Eds.), *Women and Social Policy: A reader*. London: Macmillan Press, pp. 343 – 346.

- Ungerson, C. (1997b). 'Payment for caring - Mapping a territory'. In C. Ungerson and M. Kember (Eds.), *Women and Social Policy: A reader*. London: Macmillan Press, pp. 369 - 384.

- UN ECOSOC, (2017) 'NGO Branch'. Available at: https://esango.un.org/civilsociety/login.do [Accessed: 7 March 2017]

- Valencia, S. (2015). 'Del queer al cuir: ostranénie geopolítica y epistémica desde el sur g-local'. In R. Carrasco and F. Lanuza (Eds.), *Del Queer al Cuir. Políticas de lo irreal.* Queretaro: Universidad Autonoma de Queretaron/Fontamara, pp. 19-37.

- Valencia Toledano, J., and Romero Hernández, R. (2017). 'Las lesbianas en México continúan invisibilizadas en las políticas públicas'. *El Cotidiano* (202), pp. 85-94.

- Valentine, G. (1993). '(Hetero) sexing space: lesbian perceptions and experiences of everyday spaces'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 11(4), pp. 395-413.

- Valentine, G. (1996). '(Re) Negotiating The "Heterosexual Street", Lesbian production of space'. In N. Duncan (Ed.), *BodySpace: Destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*. London: Routledge, pp. 146 – 155.

- Valentine, G. (2002). 'Queer bodies and the production of space'. In D. Richardson and S. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of lesbian and gay studies*. London: Sage publications, pp. 145-160.

- Valocchi, S. (2005). 'Not yet queer enough: The lessons of queer theory for the sociology of gender and sexuality'. *Gender and Society*, 19(6), pp. 750-770.

- van den Bergh, N. (1994). 'From invisibility to voice: Providing EAP assistance to lesbians at the workplace'. *Employee Assistance Quarterly*, 9(3-4), pp. 161-177.

- Van Deth, J. W. (2001) 'Studying political participation: Towards a theory of everything' In joint sessions of workshops of the *European consortium for political research*, Grenoble. pp. 6-11.

- van Deth, J. W. (2014). 'A conceptual map of political participation'. *Acta Politica*, 49(3), pp. 349-367.

- van Deth, J. W. (2016). 'Political participation'. *The international encyclopedia of political communication*, John Wiley and Sons, pp. 1-12.

- Vance, C. (1998). 'Social construction theory: problems in the history of sexuality'. *Social perspectives in lesbian and gay studies: A reader*, Routledge, pp. 160-172.

- Verba, S., and Nie, N. H. (1987). *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*: University of Chicago Press.

- Verloo, M. (2005). 'Displacement and empowerment: Reflections on the concept and practice of the Council of Europe approach to gender mainstreaming and gender equality'. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, 12(3), pp. 344-365.

- Villanueva, N. B. (1997). 'Socialización y comportamiento infantil según el género'. *Mitológicas*, 12(1).

- Viteri, M. A. (2008). 'Queer no me da: Traduciendo fronteras sexuales y raciales en San Salvador y Washington DC'. *Estudios sobre sexualidades en América Latina*, pp. 91-105.

- Viteri, M. A., Serrano , J. F., and Vidal Ortiz, S. (2011). '¿Cómo se piensa lo queer en América Latina?' *Íconos: Revista de Ciencias Sociales* (39), pp. 47-60.

- Vitulli, E. (2010). 'A defining moment in civil rights history? The employment non-discrimination act, trans-inclusion, and homonormativity'. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 7(3), pp. 155-167.

- Waites, M. (2009). 'Critique of 'sexual orientation'and 'gender identity'in human rights discourse: global queer politics beyond the Yogyakarta Principles'. *Contemporary politics*, 15(1), pp. 137-156.

- Walby, S. (2005). 'Gender mainstreaming: Productive tensions in theory and practice'. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, 12(3), pp. 321-343.

- Ward, J. (2008*). Respectably queer: Diversity culture in LGBT activist organizations*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

- Ward, J., and Schneider, B. (2009). 'The reaches of heteronormativity: An introduction'. *Gender and Society*, 23(4), pp. 433-439.

- Warner, M. (1991). 'Introduction: Fear of a queer planet'. *Social text*, pp. 3-17.

- Weiss, J. T. (2004). 'GL vs. BT: The archaeology of biphobia and transphobia within the US gay and lesbian community'. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 3(3-4), pp. 25-55.

- Whittle, S. (2006). 'Where Did We Go Wrong? Feminist and Trans Theory - two teams on the same side?' In S. W. Stryker, Stephen (Ed.), *The Transgender Studies Reader*. New York/London: Routledge, pp. 194- 202.

- Wickramasinghe, M. (2009). *Feminist research methodology: Making meanings of meaning-making (Vol. 2):* Routledge.

- Williams, C., and Giuffre, P. (2011). 'From organizational sexuality to queer organizations: Research on homosexuality and the workplace'. *Sociology Compass*, 5(7), pp. 551 - 563.

- Wilson, E. C., Arayasirikul, S., and Johnson, K. (2013). 'Access to HIV care and support services for African American transwomen living with HIV'. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 14(4), pp. 182-195.

- Wilson, F. (2015). 'Romantic relationships at work: why love can hurt.' *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 17(1), pp. 1-19.

- Wittig, M. (1992). *The straight mind and other essays*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Yoshino, K. (2000). 'The Epistemic Contract of Bisexual Erasure'. *Stanford Law Review*, pp. 353-461.

APPENDIX A
Interview Questionnaires

Description

I used two different guides to conduct interviews, one for the women (lesbians and bisexuals) and another for the CEOs.

1. Guide for lesbians and bisexual women participating in NGOs

Presentation

Good morning/afternoon/evening I am Frida Estrella and I am going to make you some questions about your life, your professional experience and your experience working on (name of the NGO). You do not have to answer if you do not feel comfortable. This interview will take about 1 and 2 hours. It is ok for you?

Part 1: Creating rapport (20 minutes approximately)

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Where are you from? What did you study? Where? Why?
- Can you tell me about your experience as a lesbian/bisexual woman in Mexico?
- What do you think about the new initiatives in the national congress about LGBTQ communities?

Part 2: The NGO (15 minutes approximately)

- Can you tell me about your current job? What do you do, your activities, etc?
- How did you arrive at this job?
- Why did you decide to work in NGOs or this NGO, specifically?

Part 3: Environment within the NGO (20 minutes approximately)

- Can you describe me a day in your office, how it works lake the logistics and organization?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with your co-workers? Are the majority of men or women?

Part 4: specific issues (20 min approximately)

- Do you feel that your own gender /sexual identity works to your advantage in your NGO? Why?
- Do you think that within the NGO initiatives regarding lesbians and bisexual women are attended in the same way that other initiatives? Can you talk about this in detail or specific examples?

Part 5: Close. (10 minutes approximately)

- There is another issue situation or experience that you think fit in this interview, that you want to talk about?

Well, we have finished. I will transcript your interview and send it to you to talk about your contribution in case that you want to withdrawal from the study, change or eliminate some information that you have told me. You must remember that all the data is going to be anonymised and there is no way that your answers will be linked to your person. I appreciate the time that you took to contribute to this study.

END

2. Guide for CEOs of the NGOs

Presentation

Good morning/afternoon/evening I am Frida Estrella and I am going to make you some questions about your life, your professional experience and your experience as CEO of (name of the NGO). You do not have to answer if you do not feel comfortable. This interview will take about 1 and 2 hours. It is ok for you?

Part 1: Creating rapport (20 minutes approximately)

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Where are you from? What did you study? Where? Why?
- Can you tell me about your experience as a lesbian/bisexual woman or a gay man in Mexico?
- What do you think about the new initiatives in the national congress about LGBT communities?

Part 2: The NGO (15 minutes approximately)

- Can you tell me about your current job? What do you do, your activities, etc?
- Why did you decide to work in NGOs or this NGO, specifically?
- How did you arrive at this job? And about your promotion to this job position?

Part 3: Environment within the NGO (20 minutes approximately)

- Can you tell me about your relationship with your team of work? Are the majority of men or women?

Part 4: specific issues (20 min approximately)

- Do you feel that your own gender /sexual identity works to your advantage in your NGO? Why?
- How it works the funding of the initiatives, can you tell me about the process?
- Do you think that the institutions that are funding this NGO have any preference for some kind of initiatives? Can you tell me about that?

Part 5: Close. (10 minutes approximately)

- There is another issue situation or experience that you think fit in this interview, that you want to talk about?

Well, we have finished. I will transcript your interview and send it to you to talk about your contribution in case that you want to withdrawal from the study, change or eliminate some information that you have told me. You must remember that all the data is going to be anonymised and there is no way that your answers will be linked to your person. I appreciate the time that you took to contribute to this study.

END

APPENDIX B
Profile Organisations

1. NGO A

Years active: 22

Place: Mexico City

Target population: Sexual minorities

Main Aim

- Encourage the development of spaces and performing actions that contribute to the knowledge of the discriminated condition sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identities.
- Promote studies and research in the field of sexuality for which it develops programs and seminars.
- Disseminate the perspectives that its members develop through publications, conferences, interviews, participation in the mass media and the organization of discussion meetings.
- Develop training and awareness activities against stigma, and prejudice derived from sexual conditions.
- Develop management activities for the development of public policies.

Vision/mission

- Mission: Influence strategic actors for the protection of the rights of people who have been discriminated against for the exercise of their sexuality and gender representation, to achieve social justice and equality.
- Vision: Give substantive contributions to a better understanding of sexuality and gender representations, contributing to the design and execution of public policies in favour of equality and social justice.

Current projects

- Research: National diagnosis of LGBT people
- Management and Advocacy: New constitution of Mexico City looking for the inclusion of sexuality

Staff:

- CEO: Lesbian (**interviewee 10)**
- PR: Gay men
- Research: Heterosexual Women
- Administration: Lesbian **(interviewee 18)**

2. NGO B

Years active: 32

Place: Mexico City

Target population: Population at risk of HIV/AIDS and sexual minorities

Main Aim

Prevention strategies, health education and promotion of sexual health and sexual rights.

Vision/mission

The association has generated different targeted prevention interventions, independently or in alliance with other organizations and networks, such as capacity building and development, social marketing of protected sex implements, face-to-face interventions and outreach, peer education, directed gay men and men who have sex with other men, women, transsexuals, youth and people with disabilities, whose contents and methodologies have been adapted to the needs of the participants.

Current projects

- Educational activities
- Workshops: Gender-inclusive language and foundations of sexuality

Staff

- CEO: Bisexual blind women **(interviewee 13)**
- Workshop leaders: three cis-men
- Administration: Woman
- Technical coordinator: Lesbian

3. NGO C

Years active: 6

Place: Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas

Target population: LGBTQ community

Main Aim

Create spaces for comprehensive action to raise awareness in society in general and help in the fight against discrimination and hate crimes due to LGBTTIphobia through reflection, prevention and awareness of the acceptance of sexual identities in the State of Chiapas.

Vision/mission

- Mission: We are a group of people with diverse generic preferences, we train and assist in the reconstruction of human sexuality, gender equality and human rights of women and men in Tuxtla Gutiérrez; Chiapas, to foster an environment of respect, integration and promotion of social and political development.
- Vision: To be a modern and innovative entity that promotes the gender / generic identity perspective, human rights; and that *tuxtleca* youths exercise the free exercise of human sexuality in a responsible and informed manner to reduce the risks to their health and generate well-being with social impact.

Current projects

- Reading Club
- Sexuality workshops
- Conferences

Staff

CEO: Lesbian **(Interviewee 19)**

4. NGO D

Years active: 28

Place: Mexico City

Target population: Lesbians

Main Aim:

Promote the political participation of lesbians by strengthening the national coordination and the elaboration of specific agendas. By Identifying the types of political participation of lesbians through diagnosis and promoting processes of political training aimed at lesbians.

Vision/mission

- Mission: Generate a feminist lesbian-political and sociocultural force that encourages the dismantling of discriminatory logics, for the transformation of structures of domination and the construction of a more free society.
- Vision: A world where all people regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity can exercise their human rights and citizenship, to achieve full development.

Current projects

- Comal de incidencia (advocacy pan): workshop to know the lesbian needs to build an agenda.
- Vocal Transmission: Women's Choir

Staff

- CEO: Heterosexual women
- Research and project manager: Lesbian **(interviewee 5)**
- Administrative: Lesbian
- Ex CEO: **(Interviewee 11)**

5. NGO E

Years active: 10

Place: León Guanajuato

Target population: Lesbians, bisexual and trans women

Main Aim

The intention is to be a reflector of information, to be a meeting point and, above all, a place where girls feel welcomed and free.

Vision/mission

- Mission: Contribute to the health, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual care of LBT women in a comprehensive way, through prevention, promotion, education, care and / or channelling actions, provided by people with high expertise, who contribute to growth and well-being of people, thus guaranteeing a broad capacity for resolution attached to Human Rights.
- Vision: To be a pioneering space in providing comprehensive care to LBT women in the State of Guanajuato, characterized by its humanism, professionalism and commitment to social well-being from a feminist perspective.

Current projects

- Find your better half
- Daily information about various topics.
- Complaints and suggestions mailbox section
- Channelling with therapists of various psychological currents.
- Presentations of talks about safe sex among women.
- Organization of various events.
- Pride store with lesbian-themed movies, bracelets, flags, among other souvenirs
- Information about lesbian icons
- A space to promote art

Staff

CEO: Lesbian **(interviewee 12)**

6. NGO F (Collective and non-hierarchical)

Years active: 3

Place: Mexico City

Target population: Women

Main Aim & Vision/mission

Spread information about sexual rights and reproductive rights

Current projects

Workshops for women

Staff

Facilitators and Managers: two bisexual **(Interviewee 4 and 14)** and 2 heterosexual women

7. NGO G

Years active: 9

Place: Central Region

Target population: LGBTQ and young community in the prison

Main Aim & Vision/mission

We generate options for social reintegration and economic autonomy in populations in contexts of confinement, violence and / or crime. We work from a perspective of rights and non-discrimination with young people deprived of their liberty, indigenous population and decision-makers.

Current projects

- Entrepreneur workshops for young people in prison
- Sexual and reproductive rights workshops for young people in prison

Staff

- CEO: Gay man **(interviewee 7)**
- Administrative: Gay man
- Workshop facilitator and project manager: Lesbian **(interviewee 15)**

8. NGO H

Years active: 10

Place: Mexico

Target population: LGBTQ Community

Main aim & Vision/Mission

- Vision: The NGO envisions a world where all LGBTQ + youth are free to live inequity and to know their value and power as individuals.
- Mission: The NGO fulfils its mission of uplifting, empowering and connecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ +) youth around the world in two ways: Storytelling and Building community.

Current Projects

- Safe Hour: Psychological help
- Storytelling: visibilise experiences

Staff

- CEO: Gay man **(interviewee 1)**
- Communication Convenor: Gay man
- Funding Convenor: Trans woman
- Creative convenor: Bisexual woman
- Safe hour convenor: Gay man
- Psychological support: Lesbian **(Interviewee 6)**

9.NGO I

Years active: 4

Place: Aguascalientes

Target population: LGBTQ Community

Main aim & Vision/Mission

We focus on defending the rights of people in the LGBTTTI community and other sexual dissidents that do not conform to the norm of society. We provide a space for the exchange of knowledge, ideas and opinions that allow us to advance in respect for sexual diversity, gender equality and all related topics.

Current Projects

Activism: Organisation of rallies

Staff

- CEO: Gay man
- Administrative: two gay men
- Conveners: Two lesbians **(Interviewee 8)**

10. NGO J

Years active: 25

Place: Mexico

Target population: Lesbian, bisexual and Trans women

Main aim

Our goal is to ensure that all women enjoy a dignified life from the full exercise of their Human Rights.

Vision/Mission

- We are a group with the vision of creating in a world free of discrimination, inclusive and dignified for all people, regardless of their diversity, bodily, sexual, identity.
- Our Mission is to work and educate, from and for the LGBTTTI population, from a feminist and gender perspective, to prevent and eradicate violence and discrimination.

Current Projects

- Workshops for women (psychological support)
- Entrepreneur workshops (Bakery, technologies, languages)
- Advocacy (Regional and International)

Staff

- CEO: Trans man **(interviewee 17)**
- PR & Communication: Lesbian **(interviewee 2)**
- Workshop leader: Queer man
- Administrative: Lesbian

11. NGO K

Years active: 18

Place: Puebla

Target population: Population at risk of HIV/AIDS

Main aim &Vision/Mission

- Mission: the creation of community spaces for training, orientation, awareness, education, strengthening and dissemination of Human Rights that contribute to the eradication of homophobia, discrimination based on sexual orientation/preference and/or HIV/AIDS to raise the well-being and quality of life in populations of gay men, men who have sex with men, bisexuals, lesbians, transgender, transsexual and intersex people (LGBTI)
- Our vision is an autonomous and solidary organization made up of a team of citizens and professional citizens of sexual diversity who promote human development through affirmative actions of political and community incidence to improve social coexistence peacefully that transcends time and space.

Current Projects

- Follow up hate crimes against LGBTQ community
- HIV Tests
- Workshops about the Prevention of HIV

Staff

- CEO: Gay man
- Project designers: three gay men
- Administrative: Lesbian **(Interviewee 3)**

12. NGO L

Years active: 6

Place: Mexico

Target population: LGBTQ community

Main aim

We seek to promote and strengthen the participation, collaboration and development of proposals for community intervention in the fields of health, education, employment, technology and the environment, from a perspective of human rights, gender and diversity.

Vision/Mission

- Mission: Promote, defend and guarantee the Human, Sexual and Reproductive Rights of all, through various programs offering comprehensive and quality services aimed at the LGBTI population of Mexico, friends and family in the areas of health, education, research, employment, rights human and culture, seeking to promote the participation of society in the generation of actions that positively impact healthy lifestyles and thus contribute to the construction of a more inclusive and respectful society.
- Vision: Being a leading organization in the promotion and defence of sexual diversity, counting on a base of members who share our mission and work to guarantee the construction of an inclusive and respectful society, counting on its own spaces to meet the needs that the LGBTI population demands.

Current Projects

- Support groups for families of LGBTQ people
- Human Rights workshops
- Emotional Support for young LGBTQ community
- Agenda against conversion therapies (ECOSIC)

Staff

- CEO1: Gay Man
- CEO2: Gay Man (interviewee 9)
- Workshop Leader: Gay man
- Convenor: Lesbian (Interviewee 16)

APPENDIX C
Participants Information Sheet

An investigation into the ways that lesbians and bisexual women negotiate LGBT NGOs in Mexico

Please will you take part in a study about how Lesbians and Bisexual women are involved in the LGBT NGOs, their roles and experiences inside of these institutions?

- This investigation has as principal aim to understand and analyse the dynamics and experiences of Lesbians and Bisexual women within the NGOs, how they are involved and how the agendas of the LGBT NGOs are related to them.
- This study will help to understand needs and the current situation of lesbians and bisexual women within LGBT NGOs, opening the space to discuss the improvements needed (in the case that they will be needed) and to more research about these specific groups in LGBT NGOs.
- The participants are going to decide to take part in this study by their participation within LGBT NGOs based in Mexico, who are identified as Lesbian or bisexual women.
- The participation consists of an interview in which we will talk about your experiences within the NGO as well as about your socio-economical context. The interviews will be recorded. However, all the information given will be anonymised. Each interview will take about 1 or 2 hours.
- Where the interviews will take place is open to discussion with each participant, to allow to each interviewee to choose a public place in which you feel more comfortable. However, it is important to highlight that it must be a public and safe place, for both (interviewee and interviewer) between 10 am and 6 pm (Day)
- There will be only one interview, then I will send you the transcription of your interview and you should decide if you agree with the content.
- In that way, when you review the transcription of your participation, you are going to be able to ask for erasing or skip sections or statements that you do not want to share for the study. You have until January of 2020 to withdraw your participation.

· Moreover, I will show you the specific parts that I am going to use for the chapters before putting them in the chapters, even if the will be anonymised, I consider important that you know exactly what I would use of the information that you provide me.

· All the recorded interviews and their transcripts are going to be under my direct responsibility.

· I and my supervisor are going to be the only persons who have access to the raw data.

· The raw data is going to be used only for this study. I will have the transcripts and recorded interviews and then the university will save the data during ten years, and then they will destroy the raw data, this by their Code of Practice for Research Implementation of November 2016.

· All the information gathered from the interviews will be used to the creation of a couple of papers, a dissertation and some conferences, but all of them under my authorship. Therefore, I will be the only person who has access to your interviews.

· For the study, I am going to anonymise all the transcripts to avoid relate specific people to the information used in the study. So, you are not going to be involved in any way.

· The duration of the study is about two and a half year.

· If you are interested, I will give you a copy of the paper or dissertation in which you will be able to see the results of the study.

· The participation is totally voluntary, so you are not obligated to participate.

· In case during the study you decide for any reason, that you do not want to take part in it anymore, you have always the right to change your mind and withdraw.

· Do you have any questions? Feel free to ask.

· In case you have any concern during and after the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

- Frida Estrella
  Phone
  Email:

- Emma Foster
  Phone
  Email:

APPENDIX D
Participants Consent Form

An investigation into the ways that lesbians and bisexual women negotiate LGBT NGOs in Mexico

Please answer the following questions by circling your responses:

1. Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study? YES NO
2. Have you been able to ask questions about this study? YES NO
3. Have you received enough information about this study? YES NO
4. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study? YES NO
5. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time? YES NO
6. Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study without giving a reason for your withdrawal? YES NO
7. *Your responses will be anonymised before they are analysed.*
8. Do you give permission for members of the research team to have access to your anonymised responses? YES NO
9. Do you agree to take part in this study? YES NO

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study have read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant:..... **Date:**.....

Name (block letters):.....

Signature of investigator:..... **Date:**.....

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.